Local News: TV at Its Stupidest

The Washington Monthly

JUNE
1997
$3.95
CAN. $4.95

The GOP's Dirty Rotten Scoundrels

Naomi Wolf's Sex Life

Noriega's Secrets and Lies

Vernon Jordan:

Mr. Smooth Goes to Washington

by Michelle Cottle

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Feel like you're being given the shuffle?

With all the double dealing that goes on in Washington and Wall Street, the last thing you need is the double-talk that's doled out by the major media. There is one truly independent alternative. And that's *The Nation*, America's oldest and smartest weekly journal of fact and opinion.

Week after week, *The Nation* delivers the kind of deep-digging, straight-talking journalism that has all but disappeared from the American scene:

naming names without fear or favor, whether it's a top official of the CIA, a captain of industry, or the self-serving honcho of a leading environmental group;

pointing fingers at where the real corruption is originating these days — greedy, gift-addicted public officials...human rights-abusing dictators who are "good" for the American economy...the sanctimonious preachers of bigotry and division;

and reaching conclusions often sharply at odds with "official sources" and the powers they shore up.

Gore Vidal, Katha Pollitt, Christopher Hitchens, Patricia Williams, Ralph Nader, Molly Ivins, Alexander Cockburn, Calvin Trillin, Susan Faludi, Katrina vanden Heuvel, and E.L. Doctorow are among the outspoken progressive voices you'll hear regularly in *The Nation*. Along with fresh, unjaundiced views on books and the arts.

To discover how good for your psyche *The Nation* can be, just mail the coupon below. It will bring you a full 6 months of *The Nation* –24 issues– for just $15.95, a savings of $44 off the newsstand price.

YES, Deal me a fresh hand!

Send me 6 months of *The Nation* at the special introductory rate of just $15.95 — that's just 66¢ an issue (a savings of $1.84 on every issue).

Enter my subscription:
- ❑ Payment enclosed.
- ❑ Bill me.

Or charge to my:
- ❑ VISA
- ❑ Mastercard

Card number

Expiration Signature

Name

Address

City State Zip

Mail to: *The Nation*, P.O. Box 37072, Boone, IA 50037

For new subscribers only. All foreign subscriptions, please add $27.50 for airmail postage, or $9 for surface mail postage, payable in advance in U.S. currency only. The basic rate is $52 for 47 issues.

F7LGF

The Nation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

The Washington Monthly
Volume 29, Number 6 • June 1997

Features

4 TILTING AT WINDMILLS
Remembering Allen . . . The Ambassador's Secret . . . Lawyers to the Stars . . . Looney Libertarians
BY CHARLES PETERS

8 **Breaking the Rules**
As Congress frets over Clinton, two of its most ethically challenged Republicans are getting off scot-free.
BY NURITH C. AIZENMAN

15 **When It Comes to Day Care, You Can't Trust the Media**
BY SHERRI EISENBERG

16 **Expensive Tastes**
How the military has spent years gold-plating itself out of a cheap and effective unmanned aircraft.
BY ADAM PIORE

20 **Mr. Smooth Comes to Washington**
Vernon Jordan is the ultimate Washington insider—rich, powerful, and unaccountable.
BY MICHELLE COTTLE

28 **Carrots Over Sticks**
The Case for Environmental Self-Audits.
BY ALEXANDER VOLOKH

32 **History 101 for Gen Xers**
Lessons for the future from a past that the present generation doesn't know.
BY DANTE CHINNI

34 **A Win-Win Situation**
The real benefits of volunteerism.
BY COLMAN MCCARTHY

38 **Local News: The Biggest Scandal on TV**
BY STEVEN D. STARK

On Political Books

43 **Noriega Tells All—Almost**
This kiss-and-tell memoir leaves out some inconvenient—and incriminating—details.
BY ROBERT A. PASTOR

46 **The Wasteland**
Beneath a veneer of environmental consciousness, Mexico continues to pillage its natural resources.
BY ESTHER SCHRADER

49 **Smart Sex**
How do we preserve the best of the sexual revolution, while remedying the worst?
BY SCOTT SHUGER

52 POLITICAL BOOKNOTES
Reviews by Sandra McElwaine, Jon Meacham, Murray Polner, Chalmers Roberts, Greig M. O'Brien, Michael K. Mayo.

Departments

2 **Letters**

14 **Memo of the Month**

26 **Who's Who**

37 **Tidbits & Outrages**

51 **Monthly Journalism Award**

COVER ART: ROMAN GENN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letters

The Right Is Wrong

Greig M. O'Brien and Charles Peters's piece, "Why the Right May be Right" (April 1997), did nothing to change my long-held belief that the right is, and always has been, wrong. It did, however, convince me that the Department of Education is ineffective as a leader in education reform. I do not, however, think it's the department's fault.

When the NEA pushed President Carter to establish a federal department of education, it did so because its members felt (perhaps naively) that such a department—especially one with cabinet status—would be a good thing for education in America. And a good thing it might have been had education been our top priority at the time.

The fact that education has never enjoyed such status in this country is the greatest cause of its problems. We give the cause a lot of lip service and money, but when it comes to the really big bucks required to achieve genuine reform, other things take priority. So to me, faulting the department for not being a leader when its mission isn't considered all that important seems rather pointless.

Back in 1956, my first year of teaching, I had a class of 39 seventh graders and was shocked when it became clear that only 12 of them could read and write at or near grade level. When I retired in 1982, things hadn't changed very much. And when I talk with teachers today, it's still the same old story: Too many kids lack the basic skills necessary for learning, and too many don't care about the stuff they're supposed to learn.

The DOE and the rest of the education establishment can in no way remedy this situation unless the rest of the country gets behind them and works with them.

DANIEL BORREGARD
Pitman, NJ

Greig O'Brien and Charles Peters have gotten the movement for critical appraisal of the purpose and performance of government institutions off to a very shaky start. Their effort at a substantive critique of the Department of Education is fraught with sloppy reporting and thinking from the very first sentence, in which they use the incorrect acronym—DOE—to refer to the Department of Education, when it actually belongs to the Department of Energy. Much worse, of course, is the abundance of remarks suitable only for taxicab chatter (e.g., "many" inept teachers; administrative bureaucracies "tend to be feather-bedded"), and the use of unnamed and spectacularly weak-credentialed sources (e.g., "one official with a federal agency that works closely with DOE notes...") to support *ad hominem* arguments. Finally, assigning responsibility for the numerous failures of D.C. schools, described at some length in the article, to the Department of Education, is akin to blaming the Pentagon for local street crime: Congress sees to it that we don't have the military in our streets or the Department of Education officials in our local schools.

The good news is that O'Brien and Peters leave the field wide open for the strong critique of the Department of Education called for in the editorial header. Perhaps they would like a second chance.

GERALD SROUFE
Washington, DC

"Why the Right May be Right" takes the *Monthly*'s anti-bureaucratic bias to illogical and undeserved extremes. Like most federal agencies, ED is no world-beater. But blaming it for the problems of public education is neither accurate nor fair. It is not responsible, even indirectly, for the sorry performance of the District of Columbia's schools, unqualified teachers, "grotesquely" feather-bedded bureaucracies, dropout rates, or any of a dozen other problems cited in the O'Brien-Peters outburst.

As a monitor of cabinet departments, the *Monthly* surely knows that the Department of Education runs no schools, has no authority over state and local education agencies, and is narrowly restricted by Congress in how it may interact with public education. The few programs that it does oversee are closely focused on those areas that states and localities traditionally shortchange—children with disabilities, kids from low-income families, vocational education, and the like. And when did it become a near-criminal act to staff an organization with people who know something about the field? Strip ED of its expertise, and you should logically kick the generals and admirals out of Defense, business people from Commerce, conservationists from Interior...you get the picture.

What ED does do, and rather well at that, is exploit the bully pulpit of cabinet status, a mission that Secretary Richard Riley has performed with distinction in his quietly effective fashion, to call attention to national needs and help out when asked. The push for national standards is a classic example. While promoting this goal, the feds have carefully avoided seeming to force states to buy in. But nearly all have done so.

In no way is the right right about ED. Although responsible conservatives have spent many years in senior posts there, they nevertheless worry about potentially intrusive federal control of schools—a legitimate concern in any administration. But the hard right, as personified by Pat Robertson and his ideological soul mates, views any federal presence in education as an abomination, nothing less than a blatant attempt to poison children's minds by loading their curricula with secular humanism and Satanism. The right is not merely wrong here; it is dangerous. It is also dangerous—and wrong—for the *Monthly* to excoriate an organization that has no control over the social and economic conditions that have caused so much of the disarray that American public education is experiencing.

GEORGE R. KAPLAN
Bethesda, MD

After reading your April issue, I was left wondering if you folks at *The Washington Monthly* talk to one another enough. Your article on the U. S. Department of Education painted a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

picture of an organization that does little to challenge the status quo. Yet in the same issue, you run another article ("Guaranteed Rip-Off") that describes President Clinton's—and the Department's—efforts to overhaul the student loan system by battling the system's middlemen, whom you call a "powerful foe."

The fact is, the department has been a leading agent of change and improvement in American education: The Department's Direct Lending program took on the special interests, as you acknowledge. Our strong support for public charter schools is helping innovative teachers and parents to work outside the established system in many communities. We are supporting better teaching with a plan to help 100,000 teachers become nationally board-certified and to put at least one of these master teachers in every school in the nation. Our initiatives to bring educational technology to every school could transform education, particularly in inner-city and rural areas. And the department has been one of the most powerful voices calling for more rigorous academic standards in our schools.

Most of all, the department's proposals for voluntary national fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math tests would be a catalyst for state and community efforts to raise standards. These tests would allow parents and educators to compare the performance of their students with students anywhere else in the nation or the world. This would be a powerful tool for measuring schools' performance and holding them accountable for results. It would also help to identify schools that need help to make the grade.

MARSHALL S. SMITH, ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Washington, D.C.

Viva la VA

I am writing to respond to Adam Piore's article about the VA Health Care System in the April 1997 issue.

First of all, when Piore says, "Veterans who avoid the system have consistently stated in government studies that they do so, in large part, because they believe the care is poor," I hope he was kidding. How veterans who avoid the VA system are the best judges of its quality is beyond me. That would make me an appropriate candidate to evaluate the San Francisco rapid transit system or ski conditions in the Ukraine (two subjects I have never experienced and know nothing about). It would be interesting to know if independent hospital evaluations, like JCAHO, find VA hospitals to be deficient, but Piore fails to tell us that. I suspect he does so because no such data exists.

Secondly, given the inefficiencies of any hierarchy—governmental or otherwise—I would still rather safeguard the care of our nation's veterans to the VA. At least then they won't be victimized by the vicious profiteering of managed care.

In conclusion, I suggest that Mr. Piore try using actual facts in making his conclusions, rather than syllogism and nonsense.

MICHAEL WEBB
Chelmsford, MA

An Oily Argument

David Ignatius's review of Mr. Greider's book (April 1997) includes cliché: "...as resources become more scarce, their prices rise—stimulating more exploration and production (and development of substitutes), with the new supplies eventually lowering prices again," and error: "That isn't a hypothetical textbook example. It actually happened in the 1970s and 1980s, with oil."

In 1973, OPEC confiscated oil production of American companies and shot the price through the ceiling. With it went the cost of everything, and it never came down. The Cartel developed price/volume relationships, and domestic oil producers base their prices on the Cartel's prices. There is no "free market" in oil and never was.

Mr. Ignatius can compare prices and costs of things and people before and after 1973, and learn how wrong his appraisal of reality is. America's most serious problems began when he says they ended.

JACK BROWN
Jacksonville, IL

The Washington Monthly

Editor in Chief Charles Peters
Publisher Kathleen Nuccetelli
Editors Nurith C. Aizenman, Michelle Cottle
Contributing Editors Jonathan Alter, Thomas N. Bethell, Tom Bethell, Taylor Branch, Matthew Cooper, Gregg Easterbrook, James Fallows, Christopher Georges, Paul Glastris, Mickey Kaus, Phil Keisling, Michael Kinsley, Nicholas Lemann, Suzannah Lessard, Arthur Levine, Jon Meacham, Joseph Nocera, Leonard Reed, John Rothchild, Jonathan Rowe, David Segal, Walter Shapiro, Joshua Wolf Shenk, Scott Shuger, Amy Waldman, Steven Waldman
Editorial Advisory Board Charles W. Bailey, James David Barber, Edgar Cahn, David Halberstam, Murray Kempton, Richard Reeves, Hugh Sidey
Editorial Assistant Sherri Eisenberg
Production Consultant Sherri LaRowe
Assistant to the Editor Pam Matthews
Proofreaders Michael Brus, Matthew E. Katz, Angela J. Krum

Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions: one year, $39.50; two years, $76.95; three years, $109.95. For Canadian and foreign subscriptions, add $7 for surface delivery; air mail delivery add $32. Back issues, $5.00. Send correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to Box 587, Mt. Morris IL, 61054. For change of address, please provide six weeks' notice and include old address label. Send subscription complaints to Charles Peters, *The Washington Monthly*, 1611 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009. *The Washington Monthly* is indexed in the Book Review Index, Political Science Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, and Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory and may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. For reprint rights call Sherri LaRowe at (202) 462-0128. Published monthly except combined January/February and July/August issues by The Washington Monthly Co., 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202)462-0128. Printed in U.S.A. © 1997 The Washington Monthly Co. All rights reserved. Reproduction by any method whatsoever without permission is prohibited. ISSN 0043-0633. Postmaster: Send change of address to *The Washington Monthly*, Box 587, Mt. Morris IL, 61054. Second class postage paid at Mechanicsburg, PA. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Send all manuscripts and letters to: Editors, 1611 Connecticut Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20009 or e-mail them to WashMonth@aol.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tilting at Windmills

BY CHARLES PETERS

Remembering Allen • The Ambassador's Secret
Lawyers to the Stars • Looney Libertarians

BOB DOLE REMINDS ME OF Hillary Clinton. Or to be precise, his new law firm reminds me of her Rose Law Firm during the Clintons' time in Little Rock. Just as her partners did not have to advertise to potential clients that they had someone who could ease the firm's access to the governor, Dole's new associates at Verner, Liipfert, Bernhard, McPherson, and Hand have the comfort of knowing that their potential clients, as well as practically everyone else in Washington, are aware that the Speaker of the House's principal benefactor is on their team.

••••••••

I BELIEVE LIBERALS SHOULD LEAN over backward to acknowledge the good ideas from the conservative and libertarian right. (For example, see the case for environmental self audits beginning on page 28.) But sometimes these guys are just plain nuts. Recently, for example, Ed Crane, the president of the Cato Institute, told *The Washington Post*, "I think Franklin Roosevelt was a lousy president. What he did—which is to impose this great nanny state on America—was a great mistake." Pat Robertson compared the recent volunteer summit to the Hitler Youth movement. Peter Schwartz of the Ayn Rand Institute said, "The idea that individuals must sacrifice themselves for the society...underlies every dictatorship. This is the essence of evil. Voluntary servitude is still servitude." The conservative *Washington Times* put this story on the front page and headlined it, "Individualists assail volunteerism 'hype': 'Sacrifice' for Society called 'servitude.'" Readers had to turn to page 12 to find an objective report of the summit's final day.

••••••••

THOSE WHO DETEST SHOPPING malls even half as much as I do will be thrilled to hear that their day may have passed. A recent story by Viki Reath of *The Washington Times* describes a trend among retailers in Georgetown to desert the mall in favor of storefronts along Georgetown's charming, if narrow, brick sidewalks. And the trend does not appear to be limited to the Washington area. "Downtown building has increased," Reath quotes a vice-president of the National Retail Federation, "and mall building is greatly reduced."

Those who detest shopping malls as much as I do will be thrilled to hear that their day may have passed.

••••••••

AL D'AMATO PROVIDES ANOTHER glimpse of the conservative mind at work in his attempt to explain to Republican state legislators why they should not end rent control. This wasn't easy, since a fundamental tenet of the right is that all economic controls are bad. Al dealt with the problem by saying he was against "forced deregulation."

••••••••

IF YOU'VE LIVED IN WASHINGTON for as long as I have—36 years—you've met a pretty large percentage of the population at least once. The result is that, as you walk down a main thoroughfare such as Connecticut Avenue, you encounter one person after another who looks vaguely familiar. A few of them you have met often enough to recognize and remember their names immediately. But the others, particularly those you know you know but whose name you just can't for the life of you recall, inspire panic. *The Washington Post* recently ran an article about this problem for which I want to congratulate the editor on both the choice of title, "Hi Anxiety," and the author's name, "Um..."

••••••••

KENNETH KIES IS THE chief of staff of the congressional Joint Committee on Taxation. Before joining the committee staff, Kies worked as a lobbyist for the large Cleveland law firm, Baker & Hostetler. He cannot be accused of forgetting his old friends. He has taken trips, paid for by the firm, to Orlando, Houston, Cleveland, and Columbus where he, according to *The Wall Street Journal*'s Greg Hitt, "spoke to the firm's clients and prospective clients." All of those trips were made while Kies was supposed to be working for the government. One of his former associates explained to Hitt the value of the Kies connection to the firm: "People think, 'Well, Baker & Hostetler ought to have a direct pipeline into Ken.'" I've been around Washington for a long time but I've never heard it put quite that blatantly before.

••••••••

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

KIES IS EMPLOYED BY A COMMITtee controlled by the Republicans. Likewise, Tom DeLay and Bud Shuster, whose misdeeds are described by Nurith Aizenman in an article beginning on page 8 of this issue, are Republicans. And it was the Republican party in the form of its National Policy Forum think tank that was the beneficiary of $2.2 million in loan guarantees from a Hong Kong business, according to a report last month in *Time* magazine. Doesn't all this suggest that the GOP has scandals that are as worthy of congressional probing as the Democrats' are?

••••••••

IF YOU'RE IN DOUBT ABOUT WHO is benefiting from Medicaid the most, consider these figures from Virginia supplied by Joseph Teefey of the state's Department of Medical Assistance Services: The amount spent on children is $854 per child; for the elderly, the sum is $6,770 per recipient. And we're talking about Medicaid, not Medicare.

••••••••

MONTY'S RESTAURANT IN Coconut Grove, Fla., had not bothered to carry hurricane insurance. After being hit by Hurricane Andrew, it sought a bailout from FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency). FEMA said, "No—you guys should have bought insurance." But according to Tyler Bridges of *The Miami Herald*, "Monty's, which had long hosted fund-raisers for favored elected officials...got the Legislature to agree to pay for the damage." The restaurant was paid $820,000 from a $600 million fund set up by the state that no one, until reporter Bridges came along, seemed to have any idea what had happened to. Not the legislature, not the governor's office. "It makes me uncomfortable knowing we spent $600 million and don't know the impact," says the state's budget director, Bob Bradley. How can anyone still believe that the states always do a better job than the federal government?

••••••••

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SANTA Monica Freeway story we told in our last issue comes from Oakland. There the freeway damaged in the 1989 earthquake took years to rebuild instead of the months that were required in Santa Monica. Could the explanation lie in the more prominent and influential people who used the Santa Monica Freeway and who were able to bring a publicity spotlight to bear on it, thus hastening the process of rebuilding?

••••••••

COLUMNIST ROBERT J. SAMUELson has come up with a new pro-tobacco argument: Since smoking kills so many people prematurely, it actually saves the government money on health care. He concedes the point is "freakish and awkward" but contends that's "no reason to ignore it." I'm sure this argument will comfort his employers, decent people who, I suspect, sometimes have difficulty sleeping because of the tobacco advertising money they have taken over the years.

To the argument that "Smokers are supposedly seduced by the industry's advertising and once they start puffing they can't stop," he says "Come on. Since the government's first anti-smoking report in 1964, almost everyone has known that cigarettes are dangerous." Sam, I knew cigarettes were dangerous way back in 1945, thanks to a courageous journalist named George Seldes. That was just months after I started smoking. I started smoking because I thought it made me seem sophisticated and attractive. Can you possibly deny that the ads had nothing to do with that? I then kept trying to stop, and failing. What was that if not addiction? I finally succeeded in quitting after 25 years, but only because I had pneumonia and was sick enough for long enough to get over the chemical dependency.

Needed: Desperation

Interest payment on the debt is **24%** of 1996 estimated federal revenue.* The **only** way to pay that bill in the 21st century (it'll be higher then) will be to utilize a source of revenue that can **promote** jobs & growth. **Only** a tax on the locational value of land (i.e., annual land rent) can do that.

When the electorate confronts bankruptcy, out of sheer desperation. They'll have no alternative.

Tax locations, not producers! Your contributions can keep these messages coming. Write:

Center for the Study of Economics

2000 Century Plaza (#237)
Columbia MD 21044
(ph.) 410-740-1177 • (fax) 410-740-3279

(U.S. Statistical. Abstract 1996, tables 513, 517)*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

•••••••••

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH, IN A recent book review in *The Washington Post*, revealed the dirty secret of ambassadors: They don't have much to do. "Some 30-odd years ago while serving as ambassador in India, I discovered that if I did no work my staff could do as well or better, I could finish everything in not over three hours a day, the occasional crisis excepted. ...I spent the time writing instead. Two or three books emerged."

•••••••••

AS YOU KNOW, I'M NOT A big fan of car phones. But they have one undeniable virtue: the potential to save your life or someone else's in the event an accident happens or a crime is witnessed or appears imminent. One company, Comtrad Industries, is now advertising a device that can be put to only such uses. Why not require every new car to have one?

•••••••••

MIDWIFERY, ANOTHER ancient cause of this magazine, received a boost recently from a study conducted by the University of Washington. It found that low-risk patients—generally those between 18 and 34 and without complications—are more likely to have healthy babies, without expensive medical interventions such as Cesarean sections, when they choose a midwife instead of an obstetrician. The key appears to be personal attention. "Nurse-midwives establish a relationship with their patients," says Dr. Roger Rosenblatt of the University of Washington, "that leads to excellent outcomes with less use of medical resources."

We've argued in the past that midwives can lower the cost of medical care without impairing the quality of the care. Now the evidence is that they actually improve the quality. Maybe that's why they are permitted to handle the majority of births in many other countries. Unfortunately, here, because of opposition from doctors who don't want competition, they handle only about 1 in 20 deliveries.

•••••••••

I HAVE ALWAYS SCORNED THE lawyer who argues that he is only doing his professional duty when he represents well-heeled criminals like those murdering perjurers who run our tobacco companies. I'm happy to report that I have an ally. He is a Washington lawyer named Ronald Goldfarb, who recently wrote in *The Washington Post*, "I can't help wondering why so many poor clients don't have lawyers and so many rich scoundrels do; superstar lawyers rarely seem to be available for poor clients." The exception, of course, is when the poor client is involved in a high-profile case that can enhance the celebrityhood of the star. The only time an attorney is truly obligated to represent bad guys is when he is appointed to do so by the court. And the success that senior members of the profession somehow achieve in avoiding such appointments is truly amazing.

•••••••••

HOWARD COUNTY, MD., HAS discovered an easy way to make money for the public treasury and at the same time punish a dangerous traffic violation. As an experiment, it installed cameras at two intersections expecting to catch a dozen or so red-light runners a day. Instead they caught 90 a day. At a fine of up to $100, one can see the bonanza that will flood the county's coffers. *The Washington Post*'s Katherine Shaver reports that similar experiments have also proved to be money-making in New York, California, and Arizona. Good news, there are too many drivers—my wife says I'm one—who take a yellow light as an invitation to accelerate.

•••••••••

MY SON, CHRISTIAN, WHO now lives among all the free spirits in California, recently returned to Washington for a visit. As we were driving downtown, he asked if I had noticed how few sports cars we encountered along the way. There weren't any Porsches or Ferraris or Corvettes. Only one Miata. Not only that, most of the cars would have to be called dull looking. There were, to be sure, a good many Mercedes and BMWs, but they all seemed to be colored gray. I think the explanation is that Washington is a city of bureaucrats and politicians and those who want to influence them. None of these people wants to risk the appearance of conspicuous consumption.

•••••••••

I HAVE COMPLAINED MANY TIMES about Bill Clinton's administrative

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

incuriosity, his indifference to what the agencies under him are doing every day. If only he would learn from a president he seems to admire, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Clinton has no system for finding out what's going on down below. For FDR, acquiring information was central to running the government. Although his staff was small, his curiosity was unlimited, as was the imagination he employed in satisfying it. He knew more, for example, about what was going wrong in the early days of the WPA than his severest critics. So he was able to fix most of the problems and run an agency that made an immense contribution to defeating the Depression. The most recent study of FDR's factual acquisitiveness, *Bitter Harvest* by Matthew Dickinson, finds that subsequent presidents have enjoyed ever-larger staffs and ever-less information.

••••••••

ALTHOUGH I'M USUALLY SKEPTICAL about the need for military expenditure, the one exception I always make is research. An explanation can be found in Robert Buderi's new book, *The Invention that Changed the World*. It's about radar, which was essential to the allied victory in World War II. We want to be sure, if war does come again, that we, not the other guys, have the next radar.

••••••••

IN THE LATE 1960S I RAN INTO the columnist Joseph Kraft at a Washington party. We had both attended Columbia two decades earlier, so our conversation soon turned to a discussion of the teachers and students who had been around during our era. I mentioned my friend Allen Ginsberg. "What a charlatan!" Kraft exclaimed. I was offended and found little more to say to Kraft then or when our paths crossed at subsequent Washington events.

It's not that Kraft was wrong. He was right. What troubled me was that he didn't understand the rest of Allen, which was mostly quite wonderful. Allen came closer to being a saint than anyone I knew. How then could he also have been a con-man?

He loved to create images of his friends that would make them (and him) seem interesting, even romantic. He made a legend out of Bill Burroughs. He convinced me and many others that Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady were modern Huck Finns. Herbert Huncke, he depicted as the essence of Beat. Now there was some truth in all of this. Jack and Neal were always interesting and could be engagingly natural. Herbert did look beat—as if he had just gotten out of jail, which indeed was sometimes the case. But underneath, Jack and Neal were tormented. And, if Herbert could be as fascinating as Allen portrayed him, I never saw even a hint of it—except perhaps in his erotic writing.

Allen came closer to being a saint than anyone I knew. How then could he also have been a con man?

So Allen was in a sense a PR man for the Beats. But he would also be gentle and open in a way that was extremely rare among the ambitious young Columbia students who were getting ready to don gray flannel suits and live lives of respectable desperation.

Knowing him helped keep me aware of the pitfalls and perils of that respectable world, which I joined when I went to law school and began a life in public affairs. It was from Allen that I first learned about the FBI's hideous Cointelpro, a shameful effort to besmirch the reputations of innocent leftists. He was also among my sources for the misdeeds of the CIA.

Ironically, at the same time he was saving me from the excesses of respectability, I think Allen saw me as a link to the respectable world. In the '40s he made a point of having me meet his father, step-mother, and lawyer brother Eugene. And he again brought his father by the *Monthly*'s office in the early '70s.

Eugene, by the way, deserves credit for saving Allen at a critical moment, credit that he has not received. When Allen was arrested in 1949 for having stolen goods in his apartment—stolen not by him but by Herbert and their friend Little Jack Melody—Allen asked me to enlist a prominent Columbia professor, Mark Van Doren, in the cause of getting him out of jail. I had to report that I failed. Allen said not to worry, Eugene was getting him out by agreeing to commit him to a psychiatric clinic. Years later, Allen liked to tell the story of how distinguished professors had come to his rescue. That was his charlatan side. But the point is that they should have. I suspect he scared them. They understood his potential as a poet—they gave him their highest award for poetry in 1948—but you knew in their hearts they wanted him to take a bath and be a little bit more like them.

I count it as one of the great blessings of my life that somehow at age 19, when I first encountered Allen—talking about William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* in Lionel Trilling's Humanities 3 class—I had enough sense to know that this young man had something to teach me and that what was wrong with him should not keep me from learning. Ironically, the most crucial lesson that Allen, usually so concerned with creating images of his group, taught me was the necessity of stripping away images of yourself that keep you from truly talking with others.

I had thought I had to appear cool, knowing, and in control to impress the world. Trying to tell the truth about yourself, Allen taught me, is a better idea.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Breaking the Rules

As Congress frets over Clinton, two of its most ethically challenged Republicans are getting off scot-free

BY NURITH C. AIZENMAN

BACK IN FEBRUARY OF 1996, normally easygoing Gary Ruskin was on the warpath. His call to arms: news reports that two of the most prominent Republicans in Congress, Representatives Bud Shuster and Tom DeLay, had handed out legislative favors to family, friends and financial contributors. As director of The Congressional Accountability Project, a Ralph Nader watchdog group, Ruskin felt it was his job to make sure they didn't get away with it. His plan was simple; he'd file a complaint with the House Ethics Committee so that it would be forced to investigate the allegations.

It wasn't long before Ruskin realized that he had chosen a mission impossible. Just lodging the complaints was a Herculean chore. Outsiders are not allowed to file directly. Instead, the House's quirky rules required Ruskin to either find a Congressman to sponsor his complaint, or obtain three letters from members officially *refusing* to do so. Ruskin figured Republicans would be less than happy to help him attack two of their own, so he went straight to the Democrats. But the reception from the minority party was equally cool. Why? Possibly because Majority Whip Tom DeLay is the third most powerful member of the House; and as Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, Bud Shuster effectively controls the funding for roads in every member's district. No one, it seemed, was eager to cross them. And even if Ruskin did manage to file his complaints, sympathetic Democrats warned, his chances of ultimate success were nil. "I knew [the Ethics Committee] wasn't going to do anything about it," recalls former Representative Patricia Schroeder. "I felt like I was telling him there was no Santa Claus!"

Sixteen months later—and over two-and-a-half years after Shuster and DeLay first engaged in their dubious activities—the Ethics Committee has yet to launch even a "preliminary inquiry." At a time when members of Congress insist on analyzing every drop of President Clinton's coffee, Shuster and DeLay appear to have escaped notice. The story of how they did so reveals as much about the troubled ethics process as it does about the questionable morality of these two members.

The Hammer

What is particularly disturbing about the charges against both Shuster and DeLay is that they involve the most pernicious form of political corruption. These are not your run-of-the-mill tax evasion or petty theft cases. Instead the two men are accused of the kind of *quid pro quo* that most fundamentally threatens our democracy: the exchange of money and friendship for legislative influence.

Perhaps the starkest example of this was the allegation that DeLay had directly linked campaign contributions to official actions. *Washington Post* reporters David Maraniss and Michael Weisskopf described how corporate lobbyists meeting with DeLay were instructed to look themselves up in a book listing the "amounts and percentages of money that the 400 largest political action committees had contributed to Republicans and Democrats over the last two years. Those who gave heavily to the GOP were labeled 'Friendly,' the others 'Unfriendly.'" One of the lobbyists interviewed by the *Post* learned the hard way that his PAC was in the wrong category. "By the time [he] left the congressman's office, he knew...his group would have to give the party a lot more money."

As for those in the "Friendly" camp, there's little doubt that they were rewarded with unprecedented perks. During the 104th Congress, DeLay

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

openly invited favored lobbyists to write the legislation deregulating the very industries they represented. Some were even spotted sitting on the dais during committee hearings.

DeLay's fundraising tactics were in direct violation of House ethics rules barring "considerations such as political support, party affiliation, or campaign contributions," from affecting "either the decision of a Member to provide assistance, or the quality of the help that is given." His blunt approach earned him a new nickname: "The Hammer."

Questions have also been raised about DeLay's work on behalf of interests represented by his lobbyist brother, Houston lawyer Randy DeLay. The younger DeLay got into the lobbying business almost immediately after his brother was elected majority whip. The clients came running. According to Frank Greve of Knight-Ridder, Randy DeLay raked in over $550,000 during his first year in business.

Among DeLay's customers was a Mexican cement company called Cemex, which was involved in a trade dispute with the United States. Cemex had been slapped with an anti-dumping tariff for selling its cement over the border at unfair prices. According to Greve, Randy DeLay met or called his brother 21 times for the specific purpose of lobbying him on the Cemex issue. In August of 1995, Congressman DeLay wrote letters to the U.S. Trade Representative and the Secretary of Commerce unsuccessfully urging that the tariff be lifted. DeLay also helped draft a failed bill which would have accomplished the same thing. And both DeLays got other prominent Republicans to sign letters in support of Cemex.

This was not the only time the brothers DeLay worked in tandem. When Congressman DeLay fought to allow Union Pacific Railroad to acquire Southern Pacific for $5.4 billion, some Texas voters were confused. There was significant concern that the merger would have anti-competitive effects—particularly in Houston, where the deal would give Union Pacific control over 11 of the city's 13 rail lines. Why would DeLay act against his constituents' interests? Perhaps because Union Pacific was one of his brother's clients. Rep. DeLay was also a major supporter of the I-69 Mid-Continent Highway Coalition's bid for designation as a federal highway. Randy DeLay is—you guessed it—a lobbyist for the coalition.

At the very least, the elder DeLay's relationship with his lobbyist sibling violates the House prohibition against "discriminat[ing] unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone."

Shuster's Shenanigans

Tom "The Hammer" DeLay may be the master of influence peddling, but when it comes to mixing politics, money, and friendship, Bud Shuster is the Chuck Yeager of Congress—continually pushing the envelope of what is permissible. Perhaps his smelliest achievement has been the mutually lucrative alliance he has forged with longtime aide Ann Eppard. In November of 1994, after over 20 years of service, Eppard resigned from her job as Shuster's chief of staff and started her own lobbying firm, Ann Eppard Associates. Her timing couldn't have been better. The Republicans had just retaken the House, and her old boss was poised to become Chairman of the Transportation Committee. Apart from controlling billions of dollars of government spending on federal highways, the committee oversees the nation's railroads, aviation, trucking and shipping industries. Possibly encouraged by Shuster's declarations that Eppard had been his "right hand for over a quarter of a century," representatives of these industries practically fell over themselves to sign her on. In a matter of months Eppard became a hired gun for Federal Express, Amtrak, Conrail, Frito-Lay, and the Outdoor Advertisers Association of America. Ann Eppard Associates was an overnight success; according to William Roberts of the *Journal of Commerce*, it racked up over $1 million in its first year alone—over $600,000 of that from transportation clients.

During that first year, federal law prohibited Eppard from directly lobbying Shuster; but she hardly kept her distance. Instead, Eppard stayed on as assistant treasurer of Shuster's campaign, drawing a salary of $3,000 per month and helping to raise over $655,000 for his re-election. Eppard also chaired a fund-raiser to collect $40,000 to finance a portrait of Shuster which was hung in the Transportation Committee hearing room. And Eppard continued to perform many of her former duties for the congressman—representing him on an advisory panel on base closings, vetting county commissioner candidates, and driving him around Washington. According to *Roll Call*'s Timothy Burger, Eppard's car even sported the license plate "US House PA 9." No need to mention which Congressman represents the Ninth District of Pennsylvania.

Then there was the creative use of Eppard's Alexandria, Virginia home. Shuster has described Eppard's waterfront town house as "the legal repository for our campaign documents," and the base from which Eppard did her fundraising. Yet this is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the same home out of which Eppard runs her lobbying practice, serving clients with interests before Shuster's committee. And—as if things weren't murky enough—it is the same home at which Shuster regularly spent the night while Congress was in session, presumably without paying rent. This, despite the fact that House rules then in place clearly stated that a member could not accept hospitality from a personal friend for more than 30 days a year without obtaining a prior written waiver from the House Ethics Committee.

The overlapping ties binding Shuster and Eppard caused some alarm among her competition; so did Eppard's reportedly daily presence in Shuster's office during the period she was forbidden to lobby him. The two friends could certainly be insensitive to appearances—once holding a meeting in a back room at the precise moment the Transportation Committee was passing a bill on ocean shipping reform in which Eppard's clients had a major stake. Shuster's office has maintained that the two were discussing a completely unrelated matter, and both Shuster and Eppard have insisted that they scrupulously avoided any discussion of issues affecting Eppard's clients during the "cooling off" year.

Nonetheless, Eppard's clients have every reason to be pleased with her work. Her former boss has fought hard in the interest of many of them. Thanks to Shuster, Frito-Lay and FedEx won relief from regulations on mid-weight delivery trucks—over the protests of trucking safety proponents. The Outdoor Advertisers of America should also be grateful to the chairman for persuading the House to slip a provision into the National Highway System bill that has made it easier to place billboards on scenic federal roads. And last year, Eppard lobbied Shuster on behalf of Carnival Cruise Lines for his support of a "technical amendment" tacked onto the Coast Guard re-authorization bill that would have protected cruise companies from lawsuits by women raped aboard their ships unless the woman had also suffered "substantial physical injury."

Ethics Shmethics

As soon as the allegations against Shuster and DeLay began to surface, watchdog groups like the Congressional Accountability Project (CAP) and Common Cause sprang into action. CAP's Gary Ruskin began the laborious task of gathering the signatures he needed to file each complaint. No one was biting. "There was this period of months where everybody we'd call up was not interested. I don't know if you've had the experience of calling up 70 people who all say no to you. It's pretty tiresome."

Tiresome, but typical. Although, as Newt Gingrich's case demonstrated, members are occasionally roused to attack high-profile opponents, Gingrich is the exception that proves the rule: Most of the time congressmen are loathe to file—or even facilitate—a complaint. Many worry about inviting scrutiny of their own ethics by the opposing side. Even if a member's record is squeaky clean, a complaint may come back to haunt him in other ways. If you are a congressman and you file against a colleague "that member will remember it FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!" notes longtime congressional aide Dan Buck. "Members think, 'Why get involved? The downside is incredible and the upside doesn't exist.'" As a result, members are rarely aggressive in pursuing even less powerful colleagues. "The American people have this funny notion that there is deathly serious warfare between the parties," observes Ruskin. "But what really happens is that there are all sorts of areas that are off-limits, and ethics is one of them."

While Ruskin was starring in his own private version of *Death of a Salesman*, the folks at Common Cause were trying the different—but equally fruitless—approach of urging the Ethics Committee to open its own inquiry into Shuster. The committee can (and, once in a blue moon, does) initiate complaints against members. But in this case the request was greeted with deafening silence.

Common Cause's Meredith McGehee was disappointed, but hardly shocked. If the general membership of the House is reluctant to pursue their colleagues, members of the Ethics Committee regard the prospect with horror. It's hard to blame them. Once an investigation is in full swing, the Ethics members are in the unenviable position of having to dig up dirt on the same people with whom they must trade favors and votes in the course of their other business. Not surprisingly, Ethics is the only committee which members actively lobby *not* to be on. "It is the least desired assignment in Congress," says Rep. Ben Cardin, formerly the ranking Democrat on Ethics. "No one serves on this committee by choice." Those who do get corralled into service are usually bribed with plum assignments on the Appropriations or Ways and Means Committees. And Ethics is almost always the last committee to be filled.

Not only did the Ethics Committee decline to investigate Shuster, but its chairwoman, Nancy John-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

son (R-Conn.), pushed the committee to exonerate him. In February of 1996, Shuster released the transcript of a conversation he had recently had with an Ethics Committee staffer and tried to claim that it somehow absolved him. It didn't. Shuster had been short on specifics and had only been asking about future actions under newly passed rules. And even if he had been asking about his past actions, oral advice is not an acceptable substitute for the prior written waiver members must obtain to get around the gift rule. Nonetheless, Johnson sought to have the committee write a letter which would memorialize its conversations with Shuster. This was too much for the Democrats, who charged that, at Shuster's urging, Johnson was trying to force through an after-the-fact written waiver to shield him from subsequent inquiry. After much wrangling, the committee produced its compromise: a bizarre letter to Shuster which was "not intended to express approval or disapproval of any actions you have taken in the past," but instead contained "the committee's general guidelines on the issues raised." Ironically, a reading of the letter would seem to indicate that Shuster had indeed violated the rules. Yet Shuster bandied the letter about as if it cleared him. As for DeLay, he was completely off the radar.

AP/Wide World Photos

Representative Tom DeLay (R-Texas)

Hurry Up & Wait

By September, Gary Ruskin was beginning to lose hope. After seven months of going door-to-door, he had yet to collect a single signature—and the deadline for complaints (which must be filed 60 days before an election) was fast approaching. Then, at the last minute, he had a breakthrough. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Calif.) agreed to sign a letter of refusal for both the Shuster and DeLay cases. "Now there's a man with a vertebrae!" exulted Ruskin. Retiring Democrats Patricia Schroeder and Pat Williams quickly followed suit on the Shuster complaint. And Representatives Robert Matsui (D-Calif.) and Thomas Barrett (D-Wis.) signed off on DeLay. Hours before the deadline, Ruskin rushed into the Ethics Committee with his completed complaints. "That was a crazy day!" he remembers.

If you're wondering what progress was made since then, the answer is: Absolutely None.

The committee has taken full advantage of its own procedures to accomplish as little as possible. And opportunities for foot-dragging abound. Once a complaint is filed, the accused party is given 30 days to respond. During that period, the committee's staff can begin to collect information on the case. However this is a purely optional step—and one which congressional sources say was not taken in either the Shuster or DeLay complaints.

By the time the 30 days were up, Congress had adjourned, temporarily halting all action on complaints. Normally this would not have been a problem because traditionally complaints have carried over into the next Congress. But once again, Nancy Johnson threw a wrench in the works. Johnson asked the House parliamentarian for advice on whether the pending complaints should automatically carry over. He responded that since the Ethics Committee would have to be reconstituted for the new Congress, it would be up to the new committee to decide. Johnson seized on this interpretation. The Ethics committee's end-of-the-Congress report stated that the parliamentarian had "ruled" that the complaints had "expired." "Technically, everything is over," proclaimed Chief Ethics Counsel Ted Van Der Mied. The status of both the Shuster and DeLay complaints was suddenly thrown in doubt.

It is as yet unclear whether either complaint will be put back on the agenda. If they are not, Ruskin will face an uphill battle to refile them. Two of the members who signed the letters of refusal he needed to file his Shuster complaint have since retired.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And there is speculation that Congress will soon vote to close the letter of refusal route—leaving Ruskin with the near impossible task of finding someone willing to actually *sponsor* complaints against Shuster and DeLay.

In any event, it will be a while before the committee has a chance to even contemplate the issue. So far only two of the 10 slots on the Ethics Committee have been filled. And as of late January a moratorium was declared on all complaints until a special task force could come up with recommendations for improving the Ethics Committee. The moratorium's ostensible purpose was to clear the air after the House voted to reprimand Gingrich for ethical violations and "assess" him $300,000. This breathing space might have been a good idea if it had lasted a few weeks—but the moratorium has now been in place for four months. "It's the equivalent of the police saying, 'We're not going to have any arrests until we figure out what we're doing!'" says Dan Buck. Confidence in the task force was was also shaken earlier on when Co-Chair Bob Livingston announced he was bringing in Washington lawyer Richard Leon as the task force's legal counsel. Leon happens to be the attorney for none other than...former Bud Shuster aide Ann Eppard. Meanwhile the task force keeps pushing back the deadline for concluding its work. And few expect its recommendations to involve anything more than marginal tinkering.

Representative Bud Shuster (R-Pa.)

Cleaning House

That's a shame. Although a system that relies on members to judge each other has unavoidable pitfalls, there are a number of measures that can and should be taken to force members into doing a better job. To start with, given the reluctance of members to follow up on reports of even obvious wrong-doing by their colleagues, the rules should be changed to allow outsiders to file complaints directly. Although the Senate employs this system without problems, there is legitimate concern that allowing outsiders to file will unleash a flood of frivolous complaints designed to harass members or hurt their chances for re-election. This danger could be avoided by prohibiting the filing of complaints less than 90 days before an election—in contrast to the 60-day deadline currently in place. Filers could also be made liable to a fine or reprimand for complaints deemed groundless.

Once filed, complaints should be automatically assigned to an outside investigator who would gather evidence and make a recommendation as to whether a preliminary inquiry is warranted. A good outside counsel is necessary because it is simply unrealistic to ask members to aggressively probe colleagues with whom they must simultaneously maintain cordial relationships based on mutual assistance. Shifting the investigatory burden to a fair and committed outsider gets around the problem. The Gingrich case—which did not get off the ground until outside attorney Richard Cole was brought in—demonstrated how once members are confronted with hard evidence gathered by an outside investigator, it is harder for them to keep their heads in the sand. But at present, the decision to bring in outside counsel is purely optional, and members often resist doing so. Making that step automatic would free members from having to take the politically unpalatable decision of moving forward on a case—they would no longer have a choice.

Of course the success of an investigation would be entirely dependent on the character of the outside counsel—and knowledgeable, but nonpartisan lawyers are not a dime a dozen in Washington. Nonetheless, as Richard Cole proved, such people do exist. In order to ensure that the committee always chooses them, it should be required to assemble a pool of possible counsels in advance. The counsels would then be "on call"—picked from the pool at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

random whenever a complaint was filed. Since there would be no way of knowing whether candidates selected for the pool would end up investigating a Republican or a Democrat, committee members would have an incentive to choose individuals likely to be fair to both.

The Ethics Committee should also be put on a strict timetable. Shortly after the outside counsel comes back with his initial recommendation as to whether a preliminary investigation is warranted, the committee should be required to vote. Similarly, once the counsel has completed his preliminary investigation, the committee should have a deadline for voting as to whether to adopt a "Statement of Alleged Violation"—the committee's version of an indictment. And the same holds true for the judgment hearings the committee would hold once the final inquiry is complete.

There should also be no question as to whether complaints left unresolved at the end of one session will roll over into the next one. Otherwise, Ethics Committee members will have too strong an incentive to drag their feet—just ignore a pesky complaint and it will eventually go away. If automatic carry over cannot be adopted as a permanent rule, it should at least continue to be observed as a strict tradition.

The Ultimate Weapon

But no amount of restructuring can address the Ethics Committee's fundamental problem: When it comes to judging their peers, members of Congress have an inherent conflict of interest. Unfortunately, they are constitutionally mandated to fulfill this responsibility. In order to preserve the balance of power between the three government branches, the Constitution charges Congress with policing itself. The founding fathers certainly meant well, but it's possible that in this particular instance they made a (perish the thought!) unfortunate mistake.

Still, in the founder's defense, they did not completely defang the judicial and executive branches. Many violations of House ethics rules are also federal crimes. And in the absence of vigorous investigation by the Ethics Committee, the Justice Department can and sometimes does pick up the slack.

It was the Justice Department, for instance, not Ethics, which first uncovered the willingness of eight congressmen to take money from Arab sheiks seeking political favors. The sheiks turned out to be undercover FBI agents in the now famous "Operation Abscam." Similarly, if it had not been for the curiosity of Justice Department investigators, Dan Rostenkowski, the once powerful chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, would never have been held accountable for using taxpayer money to buy friends expensive gifts and pay them salaries for work they hadn't performed. The Justice Department refused to let the matter rest until Rostenkowski had been sentenced to jail. The Ethics Committee played no role.

The Justice Department has also stepped into the void left by the Ethics Committee in the Shuster case. Interestingly the department appears to be focusing on a whole new set of issues beyond those mentioned in Ruskin's complaint. According to *The Boston Globe*, among other questions, investigators are examining whether Shuster or Ann Eppard helped obtain more favorable settlements for two contributors whose business properties were being seized to make way for the construction of the federally funded Central Artery Project in Boston.

The Justice Department is a crucial means of ensuring that corrupt politicians aren't let off the hook. Its efforts should be applauded—and encouraged. Still, there is only so much that the department can do. Many actions deemed unethical under House rules are not technically illegal under federal law.

Ultimately the best weapon against corrupt congressmen is the ballot box. From this perspective, investigations of politicians are only important in so far as they bring to light misdeeds that voters ought to know about. If it becomes clear that a congressman is ethically challenged, we can vote him out of office—without need of a lengthy and costly inquiry to tease out the finer points of his guilt. But voters can't do their job unless they have the information to make wise decisions. Every effort must be made to get it to them. Reporters like William Roberts, Frank Greve, Timothy Burger, and others mentioned in this story deserve credit for shining their light on Shuster and DeLay—but they are all too rare. More journalists need to follow their example.

The secretive House ethics process must also be flung open. At present, the committee need only reveal its decision to launch a preliminary inquiry, and its final judgment on a case. Instead, at all phases of the ethics process, the status of a complaint, and the findings of the investigating counsel should be made public. To those members who complain that such openness would violate their privacy, there is a simple response: The ethics process is not a criminal proceeding in which the rights of the individual take precedence—it is a forum for public reckoning, fundamental to the safeguarding of our democracy. ◎

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Memo of the Month

Subject: Federico F. Peña's Name
Author: DOECAST at ES1
Date: 1/9/97 4:44 PM

FEDERICO F. PEÑA'S NAME

To obtain the "ñ" in any Windows application:

1. Hold down the ALT key; then
2. Use your number key pad to type 164 (for lower case)
3. Or, type 165 (for upper case);
4. When you release the ALT key, the ñ will appear.

Also, attached are macros to input the name "Peña" into your WordPerfect 5.2 or 6.1 document. The file names are:

PENA5.WCM for version WP5.2
PENA.WCM for version WP6.1.

These files need to be stored with your other WordPerfect macros. If you have questions regarding storing the files or setting up a button bar option for easy access to the macro, please contact your AOSS support person.

Your AOSS support person can also create for you an ALT/n or ALT/SHFT/N option (as opposed to using the number pad) to produce the ñ or Ñ. Just ask them.

Important Note: Please be aware that the Secretary Designate's name is FEDerico F. Peña, not FREDerico F. Peña.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When It Comes to Day Care, You Can't Trust the Media

By Sherri Eisenberg

If you had scanned the headlines of the nation's major newspapers this past April, you would have thought that eight new studies on child care had just been released: "Day Care Study Offers Reassurance to Working Parents," announced *The Washington Post*. "Day Care Study Provides 'Cautionary Note' to Mothers," contended *The Washington Times*. "Impact of Child Care is Mixed," reasoned *The Wall Street Journal*. "Good Day Care Found to Aid Cognitive Skills of Children," declared *The New York Times*.

Believe it or not, the papers were all referring to the same research, as presented in a just-completed report by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Both the study and the press's widely varying responses to it open a window on how media bias and government spin prevent parents from getting honest, useful information about the impact of child care.

Never has that information been more vital. Ever since the sexual revolution sent women off to pack their briefcases, mothers have been plagued by the fear that child care will harm their children. Today, more than 60 percent of America's kids spend their days with someone other than Mom. And as new welfare rules force thousands of poor mothers into the workplace, that number is expected to grow.

Given these statistics, you'd think both the government and the media would be doing everything in their power to help parents understand the impact of day care on children. They're not. Politicians have shied away from this politically charged Pandora's box for years, resulting in a pathetic absence of public policy. Similarly, as a result of the subject's divisive nature, objective reporting on it has become almost impossible. Media coverage of child care has become a political Rorschach test, and even journalists who ordinarily demonstrate great discipline check their objectivity at the newsroom door when it comes to this debate.

In the case of the NICHD study, the media's bias wasn't limited to headline choices. Reporters selectively picked through the study's results, churning out stories that seemed driven more by their personal opinions than by the study itself.

Julia Duin of the conservative *Washington Times* focused solely on the negative. "None of the [study's] findings suggested that children thrive in day care," wrote Duin.

But despite her blatant one-sidedness, Duin deserves credit for ferreting out bad news. Most reporters buried the study's negative findings—if they mentioned them at all. The Associated Press story that ran in *The New York Times* started off with a great big smiley face of a lead: "High-quality day care, where adults give lots of attention to children, enhances early language use and the ability to think." And nearly everyone over-simplified the findings. Had Richard Lacayo's piece in *Time*, entitled "The Kids Are All Right," focused more on accuracy than the "hip quotient," Lacayo wouldn't have been such an easy target for conservatives like Arriana Huffington and *The Orlando Sentinel*'s Kathleen Parker, both of whom railed against the article's lefty bias.

"There was a proclivity to treat these findings in an un-evenhanded manner," explains Jay Belsky, a Pennsylvania State University professor and one of the investigators who conducted the study. "There's a sort of grab what you like and disregard what you dislike, and we'll call this science—but it's really politics."

Sherri Eisenberg *is an editorial assistant for* The Washington Monthly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Expensive Tastes

How the military has spent years gold-plating itself out of a cheap and effective unmanned aircraft—that could save lives

BY ADAM PIORE

IN THE MIDST OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, a group of bedraggled Iraqi soldiers were shown on CNN, desperately waving what appeared to be white shirts at a passing U.S. airplane. But the plane seemed unimpressed by their attempts at surrender, continuing placidly on its way. That was to be expected: There was no pilot on board.

The Iraqis were attempting to surrender to what's known as an "unmanned aerial vehicle" (UAV), a pilotless "drone" aircraft that some say is the military surveillance tool of the future. This particular drone, called a "Pioneer," was essentially a souped-up remote control airplane with a camera. Its mission during the Gulf War was to cruise the desert looking for signs of the enemy. Though limited in both quantity and quality, Pioneers performed a valuable service during the war—beaming back images of Iraqi troop movements, and transmitting targeting information to American gunners on offshore battleships.

But the United States' relatively successful deployment of UAVs in the war was one of the few bright spots in the American military's otherwise troubled history with the aircraft. The Pioneers used in the Gulf were Israeli-made. They were purchased in 1985 as a "temporary" solution while the U.S. military developed an American version. But despite having spent more than $2 billion since 1979, the U.S. has yet to produce and fully deploy its own UAV system. Meanwhile our Israeli-made Pioneers have become antiquated, which hampered their performance in the Gulf. To top it all off, by allowing spare-parts contractors to charge grossly inflated prices, as well as wasting millions trying to adapt the land-based Pioneers for use at sea, the U.S. has managed to turn an originally inexpensive plane into yet another boondoggle.

UAVs ought to be a commander's dream. They provide a wealth of essential intelligence, while taking human pilots and on-the-ground observers out of the line of fire. And the technology to build simple drone planes has been around for years. Why can't the U.S. military get it's act together? The fault lies not with the engineers, but with the perverse culture of their bosses. Leaders at the Pentagon tend to favor big-ticket items because these help justify large budgets—which can then be padded with pay raises and promotions. And however useful they may be in combat, as weapons in the budget battle, drones have a major drawback: they are cheap to produce. So the top brass has loaded on a host of expensive, and increasingly complicated additional requirements. "They want this thing to do everything except shave you and pat you on the fanny in the morning," said Piers Wood, a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel, now chief of staff at the Center for Defense Information. The result: the models developed often literally can't fly straight. "We've essentially gold-plated ourselves out of a good UAV," complains Wood. "And don't kid yourself, we really need one."

Turf Wars

The potential of unmanned aircraft was first demonstrated in 1982, when they were used by Israel to win a stunning victory over Syria in the Bekka Valley. The Israelis sent a front-line force of propeller-driven drones over the Syrians. The unmanned planes, equipped with cameras, drew radar-guided missile fire from the Syrians, allowing Israelis to identify their position and launch radar-seeking missiles. Meanwhile, the planes sent back real-time video, allowing the Israelis to monitor the activities of Syrian soldiers far below. Only one Israeli plane was lost in the fight. Fifty-four Syrian aircraft and 19 missile batteries were

ADAM PIORE *is a reporter for* The Record of Hackensack *(N.J.).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

destroyed. The Israeli drone project, begun only a year before, was declared a smash success.

At the time, the U.S. Army already had its own experimental UAV program, called "Aquila." However, a very different scenario was unfolding at project headquarters in Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. While the Israeli drones used over the Bekka Valley had been developed in a year and cost about $50,000 each, the Aquila's initial estimated cost was $560,000—10 times as high. And the Aquila's price eventually grew to over $3 million a plane.

The reason for the difference: In contrast to the simple model developed by the Israelis, Army officials wanted the Aquila to have autopilot capabilities, a jam-resistant datalink and a laser to designate missile targets. They wanted the plane to be able to survive Soviet air defenses and stay airborne for up to 3 hours, flying between 54 and 108 miles per hour. As if that wasn't complicated enough, in the middle of the project, they decided they wanted to add a forward-looking infrared sensor to provide images at night and during adverse weather conditions.

Not surprisingly, the program ran aground. Engineers couldn't figure out how to get the complicated requirements to work together. The jam-resistant datalink, for instance, degraded the quality of the video sent back by the plane. The development phase was supposed to last about three-and-half years. Instead, it dragged on for more than eight. Finally, in 1987, after $1 billion had been sunk in the project, Aquila was scrapped. The planes had successfully completed their mission requirements on only 7 of 105 test flights that year. It could have been worse: The projected cost of the project, had it been continued, had grown from $563 million for 780 air vehicles to $2.1 billion for only 376 planes.

Why didn't the army just remove some of the requirements, rather than scrapping the whole thing? "The Army in some cases has been its own worst enemy," says one Army Combat Development officer familiar with the Aquila. "The UAV comes along and then every little proponent wants to have its own piece of the UAV to do a certain mission and so you start adding all these gizmos and gadgets—pretty soon you've lost the focus...You become really involved in trying to get a particular system to meet your particular requirements and you become very insistent on it."

Gold-Plated Washers

While the Army was working on Aquila, the Navy decided it also wanted a UAV.

The Navy's experience in its own skirmish with Syria in 1983 had provided a potent argument for the technology. Manned airplanes from two U.S. carriers attacked the same installation that the Israeli UAVs had flown against so successfully the year before. Without the advantage of drones, the U.S. was unable to replicate Israel's success. This time two piloted American planes were shot down. One pilot was killed and another was captured by Syrian forces.

In 1985, the U.S. Navy and Marines began to look into purchasing planes from Israel for "temporary" use while the U.S. developed its own drone aircraft. The Pioneers purchased were the successors to the models used by Israel in the Bekka Valley.

Eager to get the planes in production, the Navy, unlike the Army, ignored the traditional U.S. development and testing phase. They brought nine Pioneer systems, each with five air vehicles, for about $87.7 million—a relatively paltry sum when compared to the $1 billion Aquila debacle. But the costs soon grew.

It soon became apparent that Pioneers were ill-suited for use at sea. The main problem was trying to get them back onto the aircraft carriers. That meant the Navy had to shell out an additional $50 million for research and development to get the systems up to speed. "It's a pretty sad story," says Louis J. Rodrigues, a GAO official in charge of defense acquisition issues. "The idea was to catch [the drones] in a net. But the net broke. So you strengthened the net and that bent the propeller. You change the propeller and that busts the net again—we ended up having to redesign the whole thing."

Despite the problems with the Israeli drones it became clear that, given the U.S. military's failure to develop an alternative, for the forseeable future it would have to rely on Pioneers. That meant they needed spare parts, which the Pentagon hadn't thought to buy with the Pioneer because the system was supposed to be temporary.

Instead of soliciting competitive bids for the contract to provide the parts, the Pentagon handed the job to Pioneer's U.S. contractors—the Maryland-based Aircraft Armament Incorporated (AAI) and the Israeli manufacturers of Pioneer, Israeli Aircraft Industries (IAI). The two companies formed a joint venture to provide spare parts and service and named the company Pioneer UAV Incorporated (PUI).

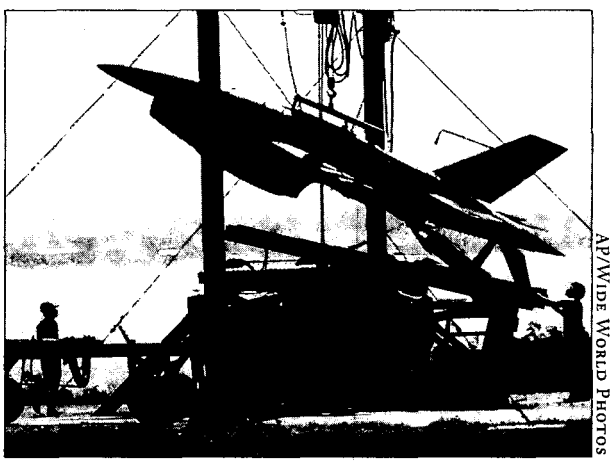
According to whistleblowers and congressional investigators, PUI soon began overcharging the Pentagon for parts. One staffer for a House subcommittee investigating the claims purchased a bolt at a hardware store for 61 cents. PUI's cost? $31.56. Another item, a washer, was available for $10.50. PUI's cost: $127.46. A spokesman for PUI claims the reason for its

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

higher price is that the company must factor in the cost of testing, military-mandated paperwork, and "packaging costs." Even if true, that's hardly a comforting explanation.

Congressional scrutiny cooled for a time after Republicans swept into power and eliminated the House Intelligence subcommittee that had been looking into the allegations. However, recently the Project for Government Oversight watchdog group succeeded in drafting Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) to look into the matter. One congressional staffer said other lawmakers have been reluctant to join DeFazio, in part because they fear IAI, which is owned by the Israeli government and is backed by the clout of the powerful American Israel Political Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

Still, DeFazio's queries have had an impact. The Pentagon's comptroller froze $15 million in funds (though after lobbying by other Pentagon officials, that money was recently unfrozen). And the DOD Inspector General's Office initiated an audit on March 24. The results are pending.



AP/Wide World Photos

Notwithstanding the system's ballooning costs, the Pentagon has had some success with the Pioneer. In addition to their use in the Gulf, Pioneers have been deployed in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia. But much of the Pioneer's technology is now antiquated and that limits its utility. In the Gulf, for instance, it had trouble keeping up with mechanized forces and had problems flying in bad weather.

As a result, Pentagon officials have once again resumed the search for an alternative. And once again, Pentagon culture has stymied their efforts.

The 1,600 Pound Flying Bomb

In 1987 after Aquila's demise, Congress decided to consolidate funding for UAVs into a single agency, and established the Joint Tactical UAV Program Office.

One of the office's first actions was to gear up for a replacement system for the Aquila. But a request for bids in 1989 drew only two interested companies, McDonnell Douglas and IAI. Each company was awarded a contract to deliver two prototype systems for evaluation and tests. But neither model of airplane could get off the ground. According to Rodrigues, as soon as IAI fielded a model that could fly, they were awarded the contract. IAI then formed a joint venture with the San Diego company TRW.

After five years of development and testing of IAI/TRW's newest drone—ultimately named "Hunter"—the DOD decided it was ready to purchase some of the planes for use in the field. They spent $171 million to buy seven Hunter systems with eight air vehicles a piece.

The GAO strenuously objected. It noted that Hunter's performance during tests was unreliable. It also disputed the Pentagon's contention that it needed the new systems for further testing: "According to test officials, only two systems are required, and they are already available....DOD will prematurely commit to production of an unproven system."

After the acquisition of the planes, the system underwent at least 180 major hardware and software design changes. And like the Aquila before it, the cost of Hunter quickly soared. When it began in 1988, the program was estimated to cost about $1.2 billion for 50 systems with 400 air vehicles. Eventually that estimate would grow to $2.1 billion for 52 systems.

But that's not all. The Hunter was so complicated, its operators couldn't even fly it straight. Between 1991 and 1996, the Hunter crashed at least 19 times, mostly in Southeastern Arizona where the program was being tested. In 1993, because of a human programming error, a Hunter veered off course and flew 750 miles before running out of gas and landing in the Pacific Ocean. The crash almost caused an international incident because some Mexican officials believed the plane was sent to spy on them. Another plane crashed two miles south of a college campus near the Mexican border.

Meanwhile, some of the military's brass were having second thoughts about taking the system into battle. In particular, some Navy commanders weren't too keen on the idea of allowing a 1,600-pound unmanned airplane with a record of crashes to land on a carrier flight deck crowded with live ammunition, troops, and other airplanes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In April 1995—six years after the Hunter program's start—the three Navy fleet commanders informed top Navy officials they were opposed to deploying the system. They also noted that the Hunter's range of 100 miles was insufficient for the Pacific Ocean. A few months later, the Army also decided that the system was too expensive and too bulky to transport.

In February 1996, the program was canceled. The cost to taxpayers: $667 million.

Pentagon officials claim the project was cancelled in part because they wanted to pursue cheaper alternatives. The success of a long-range system called the "Predator" eliminated the need for some of Hunter's functions. With modified requirements, the Hunter was too big, did too much, and was too expensive, they said. But a Pentagon Inspector General report ordered after the program's cancellation confirmed that the real reason had not been the success of Predator, but the failure of Hunter. The report "partially or fully" substantiated charges that the system "did not conform to contract requirements, operator safety was at risk, reliability was inadequate, and the system was never subjected to operational testing."

Officials at IAI say they have fixed the Hunter's problems. Two of the Hunter systems have been taken out of storage and are again being used on an experimental basis, including in Bosnia. But five others remain in storage.

Where Are We Now?

Since the Hunter's demise, there have been signs of progress. Even though some of the Hunter's successors haven proven problematic, the military is keeping a closer eye on them than in the past.

For instance, after the smaller and less complex "Outrider" system made a disappointing maiden flight in March—four months behind schedule because of a series of mishaps—Pentagon officials gave the program 60 days to prove itself or join the graveyard of failed UAV projects. It's cost so far has been about $82.9 million.

Another UAV in development, the stealthy "DarkStar" has also had difficulties. The DarkStar is designed to penetrate and operate in the presence of high-threat air defense system. Unlike Outrider, it is intended to fly at altitudes greater than 45,000 feet and is being designed to travel distances of up to 500 nautical miles. The DarkStar crashed on its second flight test last year. But Pentagon officials say they understand the cause of the problem and flight testing is slated to resume this September.

And, with the aforementioned Predator, the military seems finally to have hit the mark. Like DarkStar, Predator is also a long-range UAV with the ability to fly 500 nautical miles. It too can hover over a target for more than 20 hours. The Pentagon has now purchased 13 Predator systems with 80 air vehicles for $368 million. Despite some questions about its ability to fly in bad weather, the system has received rave reviews from many military experts and reportedly performed well in Bosnia. In short, there is ground for cautious optimism.

But while the success of Predator is good news, it was a long time coming. The military would do well to take note of the obvious lesson: For far too long, spending money took precedence over developing a viable system that could save lives. ●

You Can Help

Know of a newsstand or library that should carry the *Monthly* but doesn't?

Heard any great Tidbits or Outrages?

Seen any hysterical Memos of the Month?

Please write to us at 1611 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009 or at washmonth@aol.com. Address newsstand and library information to Kathleen Nuccetelli. All other correspondence should be marked, "Editors."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Smooth Comes to Washington

Vernon Jordan is the ultimate Washington insider—rich, powerful, and unaccountable

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

IN THE SECOND CENTURY, THE PTOLEMAIC view of the universe put the Earth at the center of the action: Ladies and gentlemen of learning believed that the sun, moon, and stars traced endless circles around their steadfast home planet. This theory held sway until 1543, when Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus rocked the educated world by positing that the sun was in fact the center of the universe. Now, with the 21st century fast approaching, it has at last become clear that the true hub of it all is...Vernon Jordan.

OK, so maybe Jordan's not the epicenter of the universe, but as far as U.S. business and political developments go, this civil rights leader cum Washington powerbroker possesses an unsettling omnipresent quality. Like Forrest Gump, he is constantly popping up at the center of news events, ranging from the 1960s civil rights movement to the 1993 passage of NAFTA. Who hooked CEO Lou Gerstner up with IBM? Vernon Jordan. Who approached Colin Powell in '94 about replacing Warren Christopher as Secretary of State? Vernon Jordan. Who was on the short list in '89 to succeed Pete Rozelle as NFL commissioner? Vernon Jordan. Who gave World Bank President James Wolfensohn a leg up in attaining his current post? You guessed it.

Today, as a senior partner in Washington's third biggest lobbying firm (in terms of revenues, that is), an unofficial adviser and golfing partner of the President of the United States, and a director on the boards of a dozen domestic and foreign mega-corporations, Vernon Eulion Jordan Jr. wields more power and influence than a passel of politicians. Moreover, in a town run on connections and relationships, this 61-year-old Atlanta native seems to know everyone between the ages of five and 95—and he's friends with almost all of them. Of course, it doesn't hurt Jordan's cachet that he and his wife, Ann, are intimates of Bill and Hillary, spending many a vacation and holiday together. As one prominent Washington attorney remarked to *The New York Times* last year, Jordan "is as close to the President as anyone I know since Bobby Kennedy was so close to his brother."

Despite all this, Jordan sails along under the radar of both the media and the public. Although he consults frequently with Clinton and other administration officials on issues ranging from international trade to political appointees, Jordan's access is largely based on informal, nonofficial relationships. As such, he is not bound by the same disclosure laws as lobbyists, appointees, or elected officials. Who Jordan's clients are and what exactly he does to earn his $500,000-plus in annual board fees and his estimated $1 million income from his law firm, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer, and Feld, is anybody's guess—and Jordan plans to keep it that way. When quizzed about his income or work, he invariably cites attorney-client privilege or ethical constraints.

In general, Jordan has little patience with people who question his business or political dealings, and whether the overlap of those relationships might pose conflicts of interest. Nor does he feel obligated to address rumblings about whether, with his seven-figure income and his summers on Martha's Vineyard, Jordan has turned his back on the civil rights cause that helped launch him into the ranks of the power

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

elite. When *The New York Times*'s Jeff Gerth asked Jordan in an interview last July how the attorney feels about charges that his influence is not "sufficiently open to public view" and that he "has neglected the cause of racial equality," Jordan responded: "I, and only I, am the keeper of my conscience." In a 1992 *Washington Post* article, Jordan rebuffed similar inquiries with the statement: "I am the custodian of my morality and ethics." When asked in 1993 why he chose to stay with his lucrative private legal practice rather than become the first black U.S. Attorney General, as many had predicted: "I do what I want to do." (And, although he declined to be interviewed for this article, Jordan did take the time to call and inquire why we had been looking into his financial affairs and to inform us that "I don't know that it's any of your business how much money I make.")

This kind of brush off has long been Jordan's stock-in-trade when pressed about his position or actions. In 1992, shortly after being named co-chair of Clinton's transition team, Jordan dismissed a reporter's questions about his insider, wheeler-dealer status with: "I do not apologize or feel any need to explain that I am participating in a process that is as American as anything I know." He even got the new President-elect into the spirit: Responding to questions about the appearance of conflict in having Jordan, then a board member of cigarette manufacturer RJR Nabisco, to help fill posts at Health and Human Services or other agencies involved in smoking-related issues, Clinton stated: "I don't think the American people should be concerned about it."

Wrong. The American people should without question be concerned about the individuals who shape the economy and politics of this country—even those who do so in an unofficial capacity. No one with Jordan's influence and connections is qualified to be the sole custodian of his own ethics. If anything, Jordan's "unofficial" status—and the lack of disclosure it allows—suggests we should be paying more, not less, attention to his business. Vernon Jordan is more than the President's best buddy: He was brokering multi-million dollar deals for his clients and keeping company with the privileged and powerful long before the Clinton clan rolled onto the national scene. Now, as the person perhaps closest to the President's ear and farthest from the public eye, Jordan holds a unique (and enviable) position. A look at how he got there tells us something about how power operates in Washington—and reveals a disturbing lack of attention paid to those who wield it.

The Anti-Radical

Like many successful African Americans of his generation, Vernon Jordan rose to prominence on the crest of the civil rights movement. As a result, he has faced criticism over the years for having sold out his activist roots for a key to Corporate America. But Jordan has always been an "establishment" kind of guy. He was never a '60s radical. He was never into marches or protests or sit-ins or any of the other activities so closely associated with the movement. "Vernon was always very clear on the issues," says long-time friend and civil rights colleague Edward C. Sylvester, "but when it came down to getting out in the streets, I do not recall Vernon [participating]."

From the start, Jordan chose to work with the Establishment. A 1960 graduate of Howard University law school (and a DePauw University undergrad), he worked as a law clerk for a Georgia civil rights attorney until 1961, when he accepted a position as NAACP field director for the state of Georgia. Even then, he was viewed as a sell-out by some. "Vernon was always snickered at in civil rights circles because of his fancy dress and his involvement in the NAACP, part of the conservative, highly bureaucratic wing of the movement," notes historian Taylor Branch, who was recruited by Jordan in the late '60s to work on the Voter Education Project. "Vernon was never a demonstrator, even at the height of the demonstration period." In fact, while at the NAACP, Jordan's job often involved working behind the scenes to mobilize "respectable" NAACP members against demonstrations being organized by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Of course, as far as white southerners were concerned, the NAACP, with its push for voter registration and school integration, was straight out of a nightmare, adds Branch. "It was the scourge of the white South." Traveling the southern backroads as a representative of the association, it was in Jordan's best interest not to appear threatening (no small task for the 6'4" Jordan). "Part of Vernon's job," says Branch, "was to look respectable."

This was perhaps even more true starting in 1964, when Jordan left the NAACP to head the Southern Regional Council's Voter Education Project (launched by President Kennedy in 1961 to channel the movement's energies away from the more controversial Freedom Rides). As VEP director, Jordan's role was twofold: find capable volunteers to organize voter drives throughout the South, and raise money for the project. This second mission required Jordan to travel around the South, convincing wealthy foundations to award the VEP grant money. To this end, Jordan's charisma,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his Harry Belafonte looks, and his impeccable dress served him well. "Being associated with an organization where most of the funding must arise from a broad base, Vernon couldn't have been identified as some sort of a wild radical," says Ed Sylvester.

In 1966, Jordan and Sylvester were among a handful of civil rights leaders to participate in President Johnson's White House conference on civil rights. (The majority of participants were business executives.) Coming on the heels of two similar, failed conference attempts (one of which had turned violent), Johnson's effort was viewed with apprehension. When the conference turned out to be a success, Jordan's participation gained him national recognition. For the remainder of the '60s and '70s, he moved fluidly within both civil rights and business circles, making contacts—and friends—all along the way. The jobs he chose placed him in frequent contact with the politicos and wealthy executives so vital to his fundraising efforts. In 1970, he took over as executive director of the United Negro College Fund. In 1972, he began a decade-long reign as head of the National Urban League, a moderate, pro-business civil rights organization. Here, the non-radical Jordan finally came into his own. Although his early civil rights work had given him a leg up on networking, it was during his tenure at the Urban League that Jordan became a member of the A-list himself. Following the 1980 presidential elections, Jordan was reportedly the only civil rights leader invited to hob-nob with the ruling class at the posh Manhattan and Georgetown pre-inaugural fetes for Reagan. This ease in mixing with the Establishment, combined with Jordan's considerable people skills, helped him procure generous business and government funding for the Urban League—as well as several lucrative directorships at blue-chip corporations.

AP/Wide World Photos

As one of the '70s most prominent civil rights figures, Jordan's high-powered connections and moderate political stance occasionally drew fire from liberal activists, who charged that he cared more about the black middle class than the poor and that he bent over backwards to avoid offending wealthy donors. One of the most publicized rifts occurred in 1979, when Jordan rebuked Jesse Jackson and other black leaders for jeopardizing U.S. black-Jewish relations by traveling to meet with Palestinian representatives, including PLO leader Yasir Arafat. Critics accused Jordan of kowtowing to "Jewish, monied constituencies."

But even as a "safe," conservative representative of the African-American community, Jordan was still a high-profile object of fear and loathing for angry white racists. This anger caught up with him in the spring of 1980. On May 28, following an Urban League event in Fort Wayne, Ind., Jordan went for dinner and coffee with a local League volunteer. Returning from the woman's home at around 2:00 a.m., he was shot in the back with a deer rifle as he stepped out of the woman's car in the parking lot of his hotel. Although Jesse Jackson claimed that the shooting was the work of a white supremacist group with a "hit list" of black leaders, the assailant turned out to be a lone nut trying to rid the world of "race mixers." (Jordan's dinner companion was a white woman.) Jordan spent more than three months recuperating in the hospital; the following year, he left his post at the Urban League for a position in the Washington law offices of the Dallas-based Akin Gump.

Although he insisted his resignation had nothing to do with the shooting, Jordan was not to re-enter public life as a civil rights official after 1981. In fact, the post-Urban League Jordan dropped out of public view almost entirely, granting few interviews and accepting only the occasional speaking engagement.

The Ultimate Insider

But being out of the public eye didn't mean Jordan was out of the action. Without the civil rights spotlight on him, Akin Gump's newest partner was free to travel the fat-cat circuit full time. While at the Urban League, he had become a regular fixture in the boardrooms of some of the country's top corporations, including Xerox, Sara Lee, Union Carbide,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

J.C. Penney, and Bankers Trust, as well as those of non-profits such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the John Hay Whitney Foundation. His position at Akin Gump provided him the perfect opportunity to exploit (and expand) his golden Rolodex—something that Robert Strauss, the senior partner who brought Jordan into the firm, says he'd predicted all along. "Vernon was never going to be a traditional lawyer," explains Strauss. "But I knew he would fit into the Washington legal community and come to be a dominant figure in it. This is a town built on the use of power and on relationships, and Vernon is about as good a people person as anyone I know." (Strauss, of course, was the perfect person to advise Jordan on the Washington power structure. A former chair of the Democratic National Committee, Strauss had long been known around town as "Mr. Democrat.")

"Vernon did not come cheap," says Strauss. "But I told him: 'We'll carry you for a few years until you figure out what it's all about here, then you will carry us for a long time after that.'"

Of course, no one individual "carries" an organization like Akin Gump: The firm has a formidable list of clients, including American Airlines, AT&T, the Korean International Trade Association, and Archer Daniels Midland. Its lobbying disclosure forms show that Akin's reportable lobbying income last year topped $6.3 million, making it the third top lobbying firm in D.C., according to a recent review by *Legal Times*.

Jordan has, however, proven a particularly adept "rainmaker" for the firm. One of three senior partners, he is not among Akin's registered lobbyists. Rather, his role involves overseeing lobbyists and other attorneys, as well as advising the firm's clients. "Vernon knows how to solve problems, and that's what the Washington practice of law is," says Strauss. "Vernon doesn't write briefs, draw up wills, or handle divorce cases. He's a problem solver for major corporate and government problems that arise around the world."

"Vernon advises clients about how to pursue their interests in this town," adds long-time friend Richard Moe, a former top aide to Vice President Walter Mondale. "Because Vernon is on so many corporate boards, he understands the business community and the corporate mentality. He also understands things here in Washington, so he can help executives understand how Washington works—and vice-versa."

Bringing in new clients is an obvious role for someone with Jordan's connections. And his inclusion over the years at such Establishment schmooze fests as the Bohemian Grove gatherings, the annual men's-only bonding event for the grandest of grandees, and the equally elite international Bilderberg conferences—to which he introduced presidential aspirant Bill Clinton in 1991—have provided Jordan ample opportunity to expand his circle of high-powered friends. (Of course, some people feel he takes this internetworking too far, particularly where his directorships are concerned. Last year, a labor union survey noted that Jordan provides legal services to seven of the companies on whose boards he sits—a clear conflict-of-interest danger.)

Above It All

With Clinton in the White House, Jordan's influence is at an all-time high, and everyone is looking for a piece of his access. More and more, one hears Jordan compared to Clark Clifford, who reigned as the capo of Washington powerbrokers for more than 40 years, following his stint as an adviser in the Truman administration. Until a banking scandal brought him crashing back to earth in the early '90s, Clifford, like Jordan, operated on another plane, where questions about his actions or ethics were considered to be in poor taste (not to mention political suicide). Once, when asked if he found it problematic to argue cases before Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, with whom he was close friends and to whom he had loaned several thousand dollars, Clifford asserted that he was perfectly capable of separating his private affairs from his public ones. (It seems he too was the keeper of his own conscience.)

Like Clifford, Jordan sees his relationship with President Clinton as no cause for public concern and, in fact, none of the public's business. The two men, who met in 1973 during one of Jordan's Urban League visits to Arkansas, enjoy a genuine, casual camaraderie free of the stuffiness so prevalent in Washington social circles. At a 1995 state dinner at the White House, Clinton, seated next to an especially attractive blonde, laughingly ordered Jordan to keep his hands off the woman because "I saw her first, Vernon."

Perhaps it's not surprising that Jordan and Clinton have become so close, considering their similarities in upbringing, taste, and nature. Both came of age in the South during the civil rights movement and were shaped by strong, influential mothers. (Mary Jordan was a caterer for upscale Atlanta during its segregation days, exposing Jordan to "the finer things" at an early age.) Both men are married to strong, successful women. (Ann Dibble, whom Jordan wed in 1986 after losing his first wife to multiple sclerosis, is a former head of social services for the University of Chicago's Lying-In Hospital. Now, she boasts her own six-figure income from numerous corporate directorships.) And both have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

acquired reputations as ladies' men. Both are known for their charm, charisma, and winning smiles, and both can attribute much of their success to their extraordinary people skills. Perhaps most significantly, as Taylor Branch notes, both men's careers have been driven by conflicting forces: their conventional ambitions (Clinton for political success, Jordan for financial) and their social idealism. As such, both are viewed as either sell-outs or pragmatic moderates—depending on your perspective.

Although offered a number of administration positions by Clinton (He basically had his pick of cabinet posts, a top transition official confided to *The Boston Globe* in 1993), Jordan has chosen to aid the President in an unofficial capacity. In addition to dispensing advice on matters great and small, this has involved his performing a variety of ceremonial duties, such as leading a U.S. delegation to the inauguration of Taiwan's first democratically elected president and attending the funeral of former First Lady Pat Nixon in 1993. More significantly, Jordan has served as Clinton's top headhunter over the years, approaching everyone from retired Gen. Colin Powell, who turned down the offer to be Clinton's running mate in 1992, to superlawyer Lloyd Cutler, who accepted the post of White House counsel in 1994. He has also been there for the First Family in times of personal tragedy, such as the suicide of deputy White House counsel Vince Foster and the death of the late Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. Through it all, Jordan's trademark discretion and loyalty have surely come as a relief to a president who has suffered considerable embarrassment at the hands of the incautious and the self-serving (Think: Web Hubbell, Dick Morris).

No one with Jordan's influence and connections is qualified to be the sole custodian of his own ethics.

"Obviously Vernon is privy to a lot that goes on, but he is totally discreet," says Richard Moe. "You never hear him talking about issues at the White House."

"Vernon knows a lot of stuff about the President and his personal life, but he'll never trade on it," former White House press secretary Dee Dee Myers told *Times* reporter Jeff Gerth. "He talks to the President about everything, I think, but it would diminish his power if he talks about it. He protects the President, his friend."

Jordan is equally careful to protect his professional reputation. His friends and colleagues all make a point of emphasizing that Jordan is not a lobbyist and that he would never use his personal relationship with the President to push clients' interests. Jordan himself has dismissed the possibility of such behavior, saying that it would be "stupid" and damaging to both his and the President's positions.

And if there's one thing Vernon Jordan is not, it's stupid. "If you call him for help or advice, Vernon will usually assist in a sound cause," says Ed Sylvester, "but he's not going to go looking to get himself hurt. If someone approaches him to do something that's substantively sound but risky, he's not going to wander into it carelessly." So it seems unlikely that Jordan and Clinton spend their days on the links discussing the specific benefits deregulation would bring Akin Gump client AT&T, and what that would mean for Jordan's bank account. But Jordan unquestionably influences Clinton's policy making, and these policy choices in turn affect Jordan's clients. For example, Jordan played an important advisory role in the President's decision to accept the North American Free Trade Agreement. As a result of NAFTA, J.C. Penney—on whose board Jordan sits—opened facilities in Mexico. Likewise, thanks to NAFTA's loosening of certain financial regulations, Bankers Trust (another company from which Jordan collects hefty director's fees) now has facilities south of the border.

That Jordan himself is not a registered lobbyist is cold comfort. Who ultimately has more influence: some random, mid-level lobbyist or a senior law partner who oversees dozens of lobbyists for his firm? And even assuming that Jordan is capable of never allowing personal or professional interest to cloud his political judgment, the lack of oversight he enjoys is stunning. Lobbyists are required to disclose their financial stakes in the issues they pitch on the Hill, as are members of Congress. Jordan is not compelled to tell anyone anything. (Nor is he likely to do so voluntarily. He reportedly turned down a couple of administration posts in part because of the financial disclosure requirements.)

Regardless of his scrupulous ethical standards, Jordan is a deal maker for big-money interests. The people he is paid to advise—both as a lawyer and as a board member—are not always so concerned about

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the public good as about the bottom line. Akin Gump client agri-giant Archer Daniels Midland, for example, was recently busted by the Justice Department for price fixing. And since 1992, Akin Gump has been representing Food Lion management in the various suits stemming from a Labor Department investigation and ABC "Primetime Live" story about labor violations and unsafe food preparation at the chain.

Nor are the companies for which Jordan serves as a director always so concerned about the little guy. Union Carbide received international criticism for its handling of the 1984 poisonous gas explosion in Bhopal, India that killed more than 5,000 people and injured an additional 500,000. (Last December, the International Medical Commission studying the effects of the blast condemned Union Carbide for being "as obstructive as possible" and creating an "immoral international situation.")

Even more notable was Jordan's service on the board of RJR Nabisco. In 13 years as a director for the nation's second largest cigarette manufacturer, Jordan may or may not have been privy to the industry's dirty laundry. What he undoubtedly did know, however, is that while he was collecting $50,000 in directors fees every year (he left the board in 1993 but retained his $750,000 pension package), big tobacco was targeting the African-American market. This should have given even a moderate civil rights champion pause for thought. (And should give us all pause about Jordan's 1983 statement to *The New York Times* that his work had never forced him to choose between his heart and his head.) But Jordan apparently liked his spot on the board. In *Barbarians at the Gate*, the best-selling account of the corporate raiding that shook RJR Nabisco during the '80s, Jordan is portrayed as a go-along-to-get-along guy, less concerned about what a leveraged buyout would mean for the company than for his $50,000-a-year pension.

Whether or not Jordan was directly involved in any of these companies' shenanigans, they illuminate whose interests he's looking out for. And even if he endeavors to be the squeaky-cleanest guy to walk the planet, Jordan—with his political influence—has relinquished his right to be the sole monitor of his own affairs as surely as Newt Gingrich or Bill Clinton.

Yet even the media tread carefully where Jordan is concerned. When the news first broke that members of Clinton's "inner circle" had been involved in soliciting work for fallen Justice Department official Webster Hubbell, Jordan's name was mentioned, along with Clinton's former and current chiefs of staff, Mack McLarty and Erskine Bowles. After that initial blip, however, no further reference to Jordan's involvement (or lack thereof) has been made in the innumerable follow-up stories, save for his inclusion on a list of those subpoenaed by the House committee investigating campaign-finance misdeeds and an assurance by *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen that, *of course*, the Hubbell incident had nothing to do with hush money—because Vernon Jordan was involved.

Even back in '92, when more than a few eyebrows were raised over the "no more politics as usual" president-elect's selection of Jordan, the consummate insider, to head his transition team, the press was cautious with its criticisms. A November 12 editorial in *The New York Times*, under the heading "Vernon Jordan's Ethics," noted that transition co-chair Warren Christopher had pledged that the new administration would have "the most stringent set of ethics rules that have ever been promulgated for our country." The piece also noted that Jordan was a director for RJR Nabisco and that, in order to prevent any appearance of conflicts of interest when helping select health officials, "Jordan could [recuse] himself in the relevant instances or [resign] his directorship at Nabisco." Hardly damning. But the very next day, the *Times* ran a second editorial that read somewhere between an apology and a retraction. Under the headline "It's the Bully Pulpit Again; Vernon Jordan's Integrity," the piece began: "An editorial yesterday about Vernon Jordan, chairman of Bill Clinton's transition organization, came out subject to a harsher reading than was intended." The piece went on to assure readers that "In hindsight we can see that the editorial...might have been read to suggest that Mr. Jordan had in some way acted unethically or in ways reflecting on his integrity. We did not intend to convey any such impression."

Part of the general hesitation to scrutinize Jordan too closely may be because so many business and political leaders consider him a good friend, or at least a valuable ally. Of course, his enormous influence—of the kind not dependent on a mere political election—would in itself be a significant deterrent to public criticism. Unlike politicians, who delight in publicly dismantling one another for sport, true Washington powerbrokers thrive by keeping the details of their business precisely that—their business. Vernon Jordan is the epitome of the Washington powerbroker. He has joined the exalted ranks of the Bob Strausses and the Henry Kissingers—untouchables whose informal contacts and clout give them far more power and access than any lobbyist. But until we can find some mechanism for holding people like this accountable, we can only hope that Saint Vernon keeps a tight rein on that immaculate conscience. ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Who's Who

BY SUSAN THREADGILL

- *Love Boat Legislatures*
- *Stampede of the Arkansans*
- *The President's Jester*

Remember how **Erskine Bowles** missed home on his first tour at the Clinton White House and ultimately decided to return to North Carolina? Well, although The White House denies it, he's rumored to be homesick again and planning to leave once a budget deal is finalized this fall.

Who will replace Bowles? The most likely candidates include Agriculture Secretary **Dan Glickman**, who has emerged as a formidable political adviser to the White House, National Security Council Boss **Sandy Berger**, and Deputy Chief of Staff **John Podesta**. Clinton would like **Bob Rubin** to take the job, but the Treasury Secretary loves his job and will stay put.

Sen. **Dale Bumpers** (D-Ark.) may retire. If he does, there may be a stampede of Arkansans from the **Clinton** administration in Washington to the filing office in Little Rock. Those interested, according to *The Hill*'s **Andrew Rice**, include **Mack McLarty**, FEMA Director **James Lee Witt**, and Transportation Secretary **Rodney Slater**.

Everyone attending the recent White House Correspondent's Dinner was captivated by **Bill Clinton**'s humor. Who wrote about **Chelsea**'s departure for college "opening up another bedroom" or the line, in reference to the **Dole-Gingrich** loan, "You know, if I'd known Bob Dole was that generous I'd have invited him over for coffee"? Our sources tell us the jokes came from the pen of **Mark Katz**.

Virginia Thomas, the wife of Supreme Court Justice **Clarence Thomas**, is not, in her job as a congressional staffer, gaining a reputation for non-partisan objectivity. In one memo she asked, according to *The Wall Street Journal*'s **Edward Felsenthal** and **David Rogers**, for "examples of dishonesty and ethical lapses in the Clinton administration." In another she wrote, "What we don't know is how much was for sale in the Clinton presidency."

A few years back we reported a romance between a male Maryland legislator and a female lobbyist and speculated on the conflict of interest problem that might arise. That relationship, it develops, was the tip of a very large iceberg that appears to be growing everyday. Legislator-lobbyist romances have been flowering, writes **Charles Mahtesian** in *Governing* magazine, already leading to marriages not only in Maryland but in Minnesota, Colorado, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania. The main factor seems to be a dramatic increase in the number of female lobbyists, although it must also have something to do with the rise in the number of female legislators who pair off with male lobbyists. In any event, writes Mahtesian, "The emergence of the love boat legislature is creating a whole set of issues not addressed by existing ethics laws." Remember you read it here first. You know, *The Washington Monthly*, always first in the realm of public affairs.

The White House has noticed the public relations acumen of HUD boss **Andrew Cuomo**. "He has a press event scheduled almost every day," says one insider.

A District of Columbia city council committee has recommended cutting Mayor **Marion Barry**'s security detail from 31 policemen to 16. The modesty of the District's efforts to reform is suggested by the number of guards assigned to mayors of larger cities. According to *The Washington Times*, Philadelphia Mayor **Edward Rendell** and Atlanta Mayor **Bill Campbell** each have six; New Orleans Mayor **Marc Morial** and Seattle Mayor **Norman Rice** only need two a piece.

Lawrence Summers, who is **Bob Rubin**'s deputy, is one of the intellectual stars of the administration's economic team. But he is also said to lack people skills. "He seems to believe his brilliance gives him license to bully colleagues he disagrees with," veteran Washington reporter **Owen Ullmann** recently observed in *The Washingtonian*. "One official who works with Summers told Ullmann, "There's this feeling of oppression in meetings. He'll snap,'That's ridiculous.' And you'll feel too intimidated to continue."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bob Dole and **Newt Gingrich** have not been known as intimate pals. Why then the generous loan? CBS's **Bob Schieffer** offers this explanation: "Friends says it's as much about Dole's rehabilitation as Gingrich's," to put him back in the center ring, not because he will run for president in 2000 but because, Schieffer says, "his wife, Elizabeth, might."

If your eyebrows were raised by **James Glassman**'s enthusiastic recommendation of Philip Morris stock in his column in *The Washington Post*, they may head higher when you learn that one of the funders of his PBS show, *Technopolitics*, is, you guessed it, **Philip Morris**.

Speaking of the *Post*, its horse racing expert, **Andrew Beyer**, recently described what the 1997 Kentucky Derby winner's owner was thinking, as his horse was almost overtaken at the end of the race and he feared that history, in the form of the horse's losing by a nose (which happened to his entry last year), would repeat itself: "Here it comes again! Please, Lord, don't do it to me again." That sentiment could well have been Beyer's own. During his many years at the *Post*, he had never picked a Derby winner, and he must have begun to fear that his editors were beginning to think, "This is an expert?" (You may wonder why an item about horse racing would appear in this column. We just can't resist any opportunity to tease the *Post*. Besides, we wanted you to know that we have other interests—not just Proust, but the ponies, too.)

What should **Hillary** do with her remaining time in office? Former presidential adviser **Dick Morris** is urging the First Lady to make welfare reform her focus. He would have Hillary tour the country to applaud corporations that are hiring former welfare recipients who have been thrown into the work force by last year's welfare bill.

You would think that **Al Gore** would have taken someone to the woodshed for allowing him to make that notorious fundraising visit to the Buddhist Temple. But no staff member has been punished or even excoriated for setting up the embarrassing event.

You may have missed a headline that must have sent chills down The White House spine. It appeared last month on an inside page of *The Washington Post* in a story by **Susan Schmidt**. "Former White House Aide Offers to Testify on Lippo; Middleton Seeking Immunity from Whitewater Counsel." **Mark E. Middleton** is a former aide to **Thomas** "Mack" **McLarty**. He left the White House in February 1995 to become "an international consultant" in Indonesia and other parts of Asia. "He has been accused of aggressively trying to cash in on his White House connections," writes Schmidt, "visiting 65 times after leaving the staff and bringing potential clients to the White House Mess."

Here's an additional detail that might cause The White House to sweat some more: **Marina Ein**, the Washington PR whiz, is handling both the account for Middleton and *The New Republic*, which has emerged under editor **Michael Kelly** as the most anti-Clinton publication in town.

John Zogby, the pollster who saw, as his colleagues failed to see, that Clinton's margin was shrinking in the week before the election—see Nurith Aizenman's article on *The Washington Times* in our last issue—took a poll this spring on how the presidential race was shaping up. The leaders were not surprising—**Al Gore** among the Democrats, **Colin Powell** among the Republicans. But the second Republican choice was—**George W. Bush**, the Texas governor, got 17 percent to Powell's 24. **Jack Kemp** ran third, but he was tied with another surprise: **Elizabeth Dole**.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Carrots over Sticks

The case for environmental self-audits

By Alexander Volokh

When people think of environmental battles, spotted owls, old-growth forests, and Pacific salmon typically come to mind. Beer probably doesn't. But that's what touched off one of today's most heated environmental debates: What sort of protection should companies be granted in exchange for conducting voluntary environmental audits?

Air pollution agencies used to think beer brewers were clean people. An Environmental Protection Agency document published in September 1985 found that volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from beer fermentation were negligible. Likewise, a 1983 report by the California Air Resources Board concluded that the state's breweries produced 20.7 million barrels of beer each year and in the process released only 42.3 tons of VOCs.

But all that changed in 1992 when the Colorado-based Coors Brewing Company became the first major brewery in the United States to complete a comprehensive, voluntary investigation of its VOC emissions. (Brewery scientists had long suspected that EPA figures underestimated company emissions.) The investigation found that when beer is spilled during the making, packaging, and disposal process, large quantities of VOCs are released into the air. As the producer of about 20 million barrels of beer per year, Coors alone was releasing 650 to 750 tons of VOCs—about 17 times more than originally thought.

Environmentalists, regulators, and industry alike love the idea of audits. But after sharing the results of its review with public authorities, Coors discovered a significant downside to self-auditing. In July 1993, the Colorado Department of Health—allegedly under pressure from the federal EPA—issued Coors a compliance order containing a $1.05 million civil penalty for violations of state air pollution laws. The fine was also to include a to-be-determined-later "economic benefit payment" to the state for money the company had saved by not complying with the laws. The 23-page order listed 189 violations: 100 air pollution emission notification violations, 56 permit violations, and 33 VOC violations. All but the VOC violations were essentially claims that Coors had not submitted the proper paperwork to the state health department—for emissions sources that Coors (and the health department) had no knowledge of until the audit.

This was the largest fine ever imposed by the state for an air pollution violation. Coors argued that it was being unfairly punished for voluntarily revealing problems that both regulators and major brewers had missed, and warned that such fines would go a long way to discourage other companies from conducting self-audits. (Coors had already spent 18 months and $1.5 million conducting the study.)

In February 1994, the fine was reduced. Coors agreed to pay a $100,000 fine and a $137,000 economic benefit payment, relinquish 70 tons of pollution allowances it held for the release of VOCs, and reduce its annual VOC, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxide emissions. The agreement also included a schedule to bring all of Coors's emissions sources into compliance with state regulations within two years.

Carrots vs. Sticks

The Coors episode was the catalyst for Colorado's adopting an "audit privilege" law, based on the premise that it's wrong to punish someone for voluntarily discovered, voluntarily revealed information that they otherwise wouldn't have known about or disclosed at all.

Most audit privilege laws have two components: privilege and immunity. The "privilege" component

Alexander Volokh *is a policy analyst at the Reason Foundation, a public policy think tank in Los Angeles.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

guarantees that the audit is privileged information. In other words, information discovered in an audit, the audit documents themselves, and any related testimony are inadmissible as evidence against a company in an administrative, civil, or criminal proceeding. The law does not, however, cover information that the firm is already required to reveal by other regulations or information about violations discovered independently, for instance, by a neighbor. In addition, the law requires that the company, having discovered evidence of a violation, promptly tell the regulating agency, in this case the state health department, and then fix the problem.

The "immunity" component protects companies that voluntarily find, reveal, and fix violations from penalties. The environmental agency can still require the company to take certain steps related to damage control, but punitive sanctions are forbidden. Again, the immunity is limited; it doesn't apply to intentional or reckless violations or to violations that caused on-site injury or substantial harm to people, property, or the environment.

Today, about 19 states have such laws. A handful of others are considering them, and bills to do the same on the federal level have been introduced in Congress. According to Russell Harding, commissioner of the Michigan Department of Environmental Protection, privilege is becoming increasingly necessary thanks to the popularity of ISO 14001, the International Standards Organization's evaluation program that certifies companies as having sound environmental practices. ISO 14001 mandates self-auditing as a condition for certification. But many companies who want to pursue certification, don't want to risk their own audits being used against them. "It is an issue of fear," says Harding. Regulated entities and the employees who provide the information for the audit feel that they can't be entirely candid for fear of what regulators or third parties—through citizen suits—will do to them. This is particularly troublesome for small businesses that can't afford to spend a lot of money on legal advice. When the costs of knowing the law are too high, companies will just risk violating it.

Corporate surveys suggest that privilege laws would significantly increase both the willingness of organizations to conduct self-audits and the effectiveness of the audits themselves. Around 75 percent of companies already do environmental audits, according to a 1995 Price Waterhouse survey. Of those, 81 percent attempt to protect the information acquired using existing legal mechanisms like the attorney-client privilege. But using the attorney-client privilege limits an audit's usefulness, since privilege is lost if you share the information with someone like the plant manager, company scientists, or environmental consultants. The survey also showed that nearly two-thirds of companies that conduct environmental audits would expand their programs if penalties were eliminated for problems that the organizations themselves identified, reported, and corrected. More than 45 percent of such companies explained that they're unwilling to expand their auditing program because the information could be used against them in a litigation or civil enforcement action. Among the companies that don't perform audits, 20 percent said that they fear the information could be used against them. And a separate survey of firms in Indiana, where audits are privileged, found that 66 percent of small businesses wouldn't do audits if government prosecutors could access the reports.

Many environmentalists oppose audit-privilege laws, branding them "secrecy laws." Nor is the federal EPA wild about the idea. As one EPA official recently told *State Environmental Monitor*, enforcement actions often depend on "tips and confidential sources," and if this type of information becomes privileged—so that employees' testimony about an audit is unusable—enforcers' jobs become tougher.

Many attorneys general agree. In a June 1996 letter to Rep. Gary Condit (D-Cal.), who supports audit privilege laws, the National District Attorneys Association wrote that corporate records are often needed to make a determination that "knowledge and intent" were involved in a violation and that criminal charges are warranted. They argued that to successfully overcome privilege and prosecute a company criminally, the state would have to "undergo great hardship," and that the conviction may well be overturned "if any taint can be shown or even intimated."

Federal regulators are equally concerned about the immunity aspect of such arrangements. Economic benefit payments have become a staple of federal environmental enforcement, and the government believes such payments are necessary to prevent companies from profiting from violations. Immunity, which would prevent regulators from imposing any penalties, could make it difficult for the government to guarantee a "level playing field" for companies who have maintained sound environmental practices.

But state agencies, such as the Texas Natural

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Resources Conservation Commission, would dispute the claim that audits hinder enforcement. The TNRCC considers the Texas Audit Privilege Act of 1995 an *additional* enforcement resource. The commission reasons that it will never have enough resources to monitor everybody, and since environmental regulation already relies heavily on self-policing and self-reporting, we might as well encourage the regulated to do the job right.

So why, if they have immunity, would a company need privilege? For one thing, a good audit document is a frank discussion of the environmental effects of all company processes—some of which may be proprietary—revealing in detail the thoughts and judgments of company scientists. And while the public has an interest in knowing environmental violations uncovered by an audit, it is not entitled to know about the specifics of a company's proprietary processes or scientific analyses.

Also, audit laws shield a company from government-imposed penalties, but do nothing to prevent citizen plaintiffs from filing suit. If information uncovered during an audit could be used against the company in a lawsuit by any group other than the government, companies would have little incentive to ever open themselves up to voluntary review.

As for the EPA's point about fines being necessary to maintain "a level playing field," consider again the case of Coors, which did the $1.5 million audit, told the agency, then shelled out another $237,000 in fines. Even though other brewers benefited from the information Coors uncovered, they neither had to shell out the money for an audit nor face the resultant penalties. To Coors, talk of a level playing must sound rich.

Battle of the Regulators

Just suppose the EPA is right about audit laws making enforcement more difficult. This still begs the question of what should take precedence in environmental law: prosecuting a company or improving the environment? If the threat of prosecution prevents a company from taking action that would improve the environment, then making the enforcers' jobs tougher in those cases may be a good idea. After all, the ultimate goal of environmental regulation and enforcement shouldn't be to rack up fines and lawsuits, but to encourage companies to minimize their negative impact on the environment. As Howard Wetters, a Democratic state representative from Michigan, put it, "We want to make sure the environment is cleaned up. We're more interested in that than in simply punishing people. I think that philosophy, as I've seen it in agriculture, has been a far more successful way of enforcing and regulating than through the adversarial process we have used to enforce environmental laws."

Instead, the EPA has suggested (over the objections of Congress) that it may increase enforcement—including "overfiling," or filing its own lawsuit if it dislikes what the state is doing—in states with highly protective audit laws like Michigan, Colorado, and Texas. Moreover, the EPA is threatening to "take back" a whole range of activities currently delegated to the states, like solid waste management, wastewater permitting, or asbestos programs. The EPA has specifically targeted Idaho's air pollution operating permit program, which the state runs by delegation from the federal government under the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments.

This is where, for state environmental officials, it gets personal. James Seif, Pennsylvania's Environmental Protection Secretary, accused the EPA of being on a vendetta against states that don't toe the line; "It appears to be our turn in this pattern of public attacks," he lamented to *The New York Times*. Last November, Michigan's commissioner Harding and 14 other state environmental commissioners sent an angry letter to EPA administrator Carol Browner, asking that the agency not "unduly interfere" with state enforcement matters without solid evidence that audit laws "undermine state enforcement authority." These complaints are echoed by observers from both ends of the political spectrum. On the right, the Washington Legal Foundation, a public-interest law firm, has characterized the EPA's behavior as "bludgeoning" and "blackmail"; according to a WLF report, states with audit-privilege laws haven't reported a decrease in environmental enforcement activity or in the environmental quality due to such laws, though they are now getting more environmental results for less money. On the left, the Progressive Policy Foundation has suggested that auditing makes "eminent sense" and that state laws should be treated as a "demonstration project" to find out which enforcement strategies work and which don't.

Currently, the EPA has its own audit-privilege policy, and notes that since its implementation in January 1996, 76 companies have disclosed violations—with most paying no penalties. But the EPA's policy is substantially weaker than that of many state programs and ultimately can be expected to yield smaller benefits than other bills under proposal. The EPA puts more requirements on companies that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

want to benefit from audit privilege, and often only reduces fines instead of eliminating them. Moreover, the EPA's policy is not binding on the EPA and has no effect on the Department of Justice, which can prosecute criminal cases regardless of what the EPA recommends. It also applies only to government prosecution, providing no protection against suits by outside organizations; and it only covers corporate environmental violations, not violations by individual employees. Finally, it only protects the audit documents themselves, not testimony about them, so a prosecutor who wants to use audit information against the company can still make a member of the audit team testify about what was in the audit.

State audit-privilege laws don't constitute a rollback of environmental protection; they are not intended to pre-empt existing federal laws. All regulations on the books will remain on the books, which means that federal enforcers will continue to keep an eye on what smokestacks in Ohio are doing to the rivers or trees in Indiana. Therefore, any environmental "race to the bottom" would be unlikely.

Audit-privilege laws, in the end, are good policy. Whether you believe organizations conduct self-audits in the name of good corporate citizenship or because they want to keep regulators off their backs doesn't really matter. The result is the same: Companies pay greater attention to their environmental practices. These laws improve environmental quality by giving firms incentive to discover and correct problems. They save taxpayers money by allowing enforcement agencies to concentrate on prosecuting "bad actors"—knowing violators who act recklessly and cause harm. They help move enforcement agencies away from a "bean-counting" mindset that leads them to obsess about the number of enforcement actions and monetary penalties issued because they have no other definition of "success." They promote fairness by not punishing people who voluntarily reveal information they didn't have to find out about in the first place. And most importantly, the laws foster an atmosphere of cooperation between the regulators and the regulated—an atmosphere which is sorely needed. ●

Follow in Famous Footsteps

The Washington Monthly is seeking editorial interns for late summer and fall. Internships involve all aspects of magazine production, business, writing, editing, and design, and are unpaid.

Past interns have gone on to careers at *The New York Times*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *The Economist*, *The Washington Post*, *The New Republic*, *Slate*, *Wired*, and The White House. Applicants should send a résumé, three clips, and a cover letter that includes your availability dates after August 15 to:

Kathleen Nuccetelli
The Washington Monthly
1611 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009

...Be an Intern at the *Monthly*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

History 101 for Gen Xers

Lessons for the future from a past that the present generation doesn't know

BY DANTE CHINNI

AS GENERATIONS GO, MY OWN Generation X is a dour lot. We don't get excited very easily. We fear we are the targets of evil Madison Avenue ad campaigns. And we are not terribly optimistic about the future. In fact, our sad state is such old news that the media are beyond chronicling our angst; now they're obsessed with finding its root. Some believe it's because we might never see a dime of Social Security money. Others say it's because our spokesman, Douglas Coupland, has given us a bad rap. But the real reason, the seed of our moroseness, can be explained through the Detroit Red Wings—although the Chicago Cubs and the New York Jets are arguably just as useful. Stay with me. This isn't about sports.

The Red Wings, Detroit's hockey franchise, have not won a Stanley Cup in 42 years, the NHL's longest current dry spell. The Cubs' legendary World Series victory drought now stands at 89 years. For the Jets, it's been a painful 28 years since their last championship. In each case, it's not just that the team can't seem to win, it's that many of us can't even remember what it was like when the team was great. And that is Gen X's problem. Born in the late 1960s and early '70s, our experience has been a lengthy national losing streak. Ask anyone of my generation what our era's defining moments have been and you will get different answers—Vietnam's conclusion, Nixon's resignation, the Iran hostage crisis, the Space Shuttle explosion—but the answers will almost always be negative. Even the greatest victories we've witnessed, the fall of the Soviet Union and our victory in the Gulf War, are at best incomplete, with Saddam Hussein still in power and Russia on the verge of chaos.

Older people, who have lived through both the trials of the Depression and World War II, and the better times that followed, perceive the setbacks of the last 25 years as unfortunate moments on a long historical timeline. Our generation sees them as the timeline itself. And disillusioning times make for disillusioned people. But while sarcastic self-awareness (our trademark) has its place, it will only take us so far. We need to understand that our nation's experience over the past three decades is not our nation's entire experience; our society, our economy, and our government weren't always what they are today.

With this in mind, I went in search of a little perspective. Have there been times that were better, when Americans felt less cynicism about their leaders and institutions? Armed with a six-pack (for bribery purposes) and a notebook, I convinced a few of my less historically challenged friends to fill me in on a little pre-1970s America. (The names have been changed to protect the guilty.)

(My opening question was clearly one they'd been expecting.) *Have there been U.S. presidents who were widely admired and respected?*

Burt: Of course. Roosevelt, Eisenhower, and Kennedy were admired and respected by a clear majority of the American people. FDR would not have been elected four times if he hadn't been revered by his countrymen. Dwight Eisenhower was a hero of World War

DANTE CHINNI *is a reporter-researcher for* Newsweek.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

II. Practically everyone, even Democrats, liked Ike—and respected him. As for Kennedy, go back and watch the television replays of the weekend he was killed. Those long lines of mourners waiting to pass by his bier in the Capitol Rotunda and those grief-stricken faces along the route of the funeral procession may give you some idea of the depth of feeling he inspired.

Well, what about the institutions—the public schools, the federal government? Have they ever worked?

Gus: I'll field this one. Even the big-city public schools that seem so terrible today were good as recently as the '50s. The New York City school system was widely admired. Stuyvesant and Bronx Science were considered the equal of the best private schools. As for the federal government, keep in mind that the American military, which, admittedly, seemed such a disaster at Pearl Harbor, pulled itself together by June 1942, going on to win big at Midway, then continuing with a series of impressive triumphs in Europe and the Pacific that led to the Japanese and German surrenders in 1945.

As for the rest of the government, why don't you read up on the CCC's (Civilian Conservation Corps) success in putting 600,000 young men to work during the depth of the Depression? Or how about the revitalization that the Tennessee Valley Authority brought to an entire region in the '30s and the '40s? There's also the Office of Price Administration's success in holding inflation down to 3 percent from 1943 to 1946, when inflationary pressures were at their worst, and the revolution in transportation brought about by the Interstate Highway System during the 1950s. Then, of course, there was the post office, which was a miracle of efficiency throughout the '30s and '40s—delivering the mail twice a day to homes and three times a day to the office. When I first moved to New York, I could put a 13-cent special delivery stamp on a letter to my girlfriend in Washington, mail it in the morning, and it would be in her hands by that evening. In fact, the Post Office remained impressive through the 1950s. Then you have to think about NASA in the 1960s, when the organization took just eight years from the time it was given the assignment by Kennedy to put a man on the moon.

Sure, government can work—and it did then. Maybe you kids, instead of being so cynical, should study why it did. Hey—pass me some of those chips.

But even if we do figure out how to make government work again, we're going to need money. Today, we don't even seem able to scrounge up funds to fill the potholes or fix the toilets in our children's schools. Can we have higher taxes to meet our public needs, or would that mean an end to economic growth?

Burt: What are they teaching you people in school? This whole argument about higher taxes discouraging work is ridiculous. The country had much higher income taxes than we do today during the periods of great economic growth in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. And during a lot of that time, we had lower unemployment than we do today.

We also had higher estate taxes. As late as the 1970s, they kicked in at $200,000 instead of today's $600,000. Of course, this figure is about to be raised even higher, as affluent yuppies realize they are about to inherit from Mom and Dad and don't want to share with Uncle Sam.

Have the affluent always been so unwilling to pitch in?

John: Well, there are always a fair number of selfish rich folks, but more of the well-off used to be willing to do their part. Not only did they pay much higher taxes than they do today, they even did their share of military service. From 1940 to the mid-1960s, the Kennedys and the Elvises served right along with the poor and the middle-class. Unfortunately, Vietnam gave the rich a good excuse for avoiding service—which they've continued to do even though their excuse is long gone. This, along with the flight of the affluent from the public schools and their proclivity for gated communities, has created a gulf in our society between the privileged and the rest of us.

Speaking of gulfs, what about the separation between whites and blacks, and especially between Jews and blacks? Has it always been this bad?

Burt: Race has always been a problem, but things were better in the '60s when many whites joined with blacks in the civil rights struggle. Remember, it was a 99 percent white Congress that enacted the civil rights laws of the '60s. And of those three young men who were killed by the white mob in Mississippi—I assume you saw the movie *Mississippi Burning*—one was black, but two were Jewish. Even before the movement really got rolling, during the '30s and '40s blacks and Jews frequently pulled together to fight prejudice.

With the last of the beer and chips gone, I decided it was time to go. But I came away feeling a bit more hopeful. After all, my beloved Red Wings are looking good in this year's playoffs. The Jets just hired a coach who knows how to win the big game. And the Cubs, who started the season 0-14? Hey, there's always next year. ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For long-time teacher and journalist Colman McCarthy, the word "volunteerism" doesn't conjure images of the recent Philadelphia summit, with its high-profile leaders Bill Clinton, Colin Powell, and George Bush calling for Americans to get involved. In fact, he found the whole event wildly hypocritical. Rather, McCarthy relates to volunteerism on a more personal level: Four years ago, his son John started "Elementary Baseball," which began as a sports program for inner-city school kids in the Washington, D.C. area but quickly blossomed into a literacy effort that matches at-risk youth with mentors and tutors. The elder McCarthy was soon dispatching his own high school and college students to serve in his son's program.

In this personal essay, McCarthy shares the insights he has gained from observing the progress of Elementary Baseball. While the children participating in the program have shown marked improvement, the jury is still out on how much it will ultimately benefit them. But one thing is certain: the program has had a profound impact on the volunteers. They have developed compassion, a better understanding of the world beyond their front door, and a healthy skepticism towards the political leaders who allow social and economic injustice to persist.

A Win-Win Situation

The real benefits of volunteerism

By Colman McCarthy

On the eve of the national summit on volunteerism in Philadelphia, A. Franklin Burgess Jr., a District of Columbia Superior Court judge, traveled to Frederick, Md., with Anthony Taylor, a sixth grader at Garrison Elementary School in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington. Burgess has been mentoring the youngster for the past three years. On this spring evening, the judge and the student took in the Class-A Carolina League contest between the Frederick Keys and the Wilmington Blue Rocks. That was the first treat for Taylor. The second came after the game when he and Burgess went to a restaurant for dinner with a friend who brought along some players from the Keys and Blue Rocks.

What Bill Clinton, Colin Powell, George Bush and assorted other exhorters to goodness were preaching in Philadelphia, Judge Burgess was practicing. And it should be noted that writing of his involvement in the life of Anthony Taylor is more than another exercise in journalism for me. The program in which they participate is Elementary Baseball, a non-profit venture that my son John McCarthy started four years ago after a stint in the minor leagues.

In 1993, John, who attended public schools from first grade through college, gave a motivational talk at Garrison Elementary. He told stories about Satchel Paige and Hank Aaron—both went to the same grade school in Mobile—and encouraged the Garrison kids to be the best baseball players they could be.

Baseball? they asked. What's that?

Few had ever played. For poor inner city kids, baseball is unaffordable: Families have little money for gloves, balls, bats. Then too, what families? Baseball is a game passed from fathers to children. More than 90 percent of Garrison's students live in fatherless homes. Many are raised by grandmothers.

John was invited by the Garrison principal to organize a baseball program. In a year, the school was

Colman McCarthy *directs the Center for Teaching Peace, a Washington non-profit that supplies teachers and information to schools wanting courses on nonviolence.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the only one in the District with its own team. At the first practice, kids had to be told to run the bases counter-clockwise. They called runs "points."

If baseball was foreign to many, so also was literacy and the habit of reading. Few had an adult who pushed them educationally outside the classroom. Most males in the lives of these children were failures: relatives in prison, drug abusers, layabouts.

After teaching the Garrison children that first base was to the right, not left, John expanded Elementary Baseball into a literacy program. To be on the baseball team—Garrison now has six—the kids also had to attend an afterschool reading program where they were matched with a mentor and a tutor. To find the mentors, John turned to Chief Judge Eugene Hamilton of the Superior Court. John offered a simple, but persuasive case for why members of the court bench should come to the bench at the ballfield: Get into the lives of at-risk kids now in a positive way as mentors, he argued, or you may be in their lives in 10 or 15 years in a negative way as you're dispatching them off to jail.

At Hamilton's urging, judges and other members of the court heeded the call. By the time of the Philadelphia summit, Elementary Baseball—supported by foundation and federal funds—was matching more than 60 adults from the court with Garrison children.

Frank Burgess, Princeton '65 and Harvard Law '71, with two years of the Peace Corps in between, has been mentoring Anthony Taylor for three years. There have been lunch dates in the judge's chambers, at least two outings a month, and regular attendance at Anthony's baseball games.

Burgess, who is the presiding judge in the court's criminal division and who oversees cases in which up to 90 percent of the defendants are young black males from the kind of neighborhood where Garrison Elementary is located, says he has seen improvement in Anthony's self-control: fewer tantrums during games, fewer outbursts at umpires. Though not immediately measurable, apart from the rise in his scores on national reading exams, Anthony appears to be benefiting from his involvement in the program. I know him to be more sociable, less withdrawn. Still, there are no guarantees. "In volunteer work," Burgess says, "we're not dealing in solutions to large-scale problems. It's on an individual basis, one on one. We have to believe we're fulfilling our responsibilities if we help one or two people along the way. . . .Within any culture, it's difficult to know who's going to achieve and avoid crime and who won't. Kids can come from the most poverty-stricken background and [not] have mentors like me and still...rise above it and...[not] commit crimes."

In addition to Garrison's mentor program, during the last school year, over 70 literacy tutors—primarily college and high school students—were working individually with Garrison children. In late March, the President and Hillary Clinton spent a morning at the school, advancing what is part of the administration's proposed $2.7 billion "America Reads Challenge." The goal is to recruit more than one million literacy volunteers for elementary school students to ensure that every child learns to read.

Will it happen? After four years of observing Elementary Baseball close-up and recruiting tutors from my peace studies classes at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, the University of Maryland, and Georgetown University Law Center, I can report this about mentoring and literacy volunteerism: We can be more certain about the benefits it gives to the service providers than those it brings to the service receivers.

An Ulterior Motive

One of the main reasons that I've been pushing my students to get out of the classrooms and into the lives of people in pain is to lessen the intellectual damage that we teachers do to our students. We are so intent on cramming theories and abstractions into their heads that they leave us idea-rich but experience-poor. Be smart, be brainy, we tell them: Make A's in school and you are predestined to make A's in life. We lie to the students.

To correct the problem of experience-poverty, I've been sending students to Garrison and Elementary Baseball for the past four years. What they learn through service is a way of tying ideas in the head to actions of the heart.

The benefits are as obvious as they are unsentimental, even if the way my students express themselves is still tentative. Sarah Heard, one of my Bethesda-Chevy Chase seniors now doing well at Amherst, wrote last year of working with a child at Garrison: "I definitely gained a great amount from this experience. It was sad to have it end. It has given me an inspiration to follow up on tutoring activities after high school. I gained an enormous amount from the teachers at Garrison as well. Those who stayed after school to tutor genuinely cared for their students. The experience opened up a whole new area for me, and perhaps I will go into teaching in the future."

Dilshad Husain was in my University of Maryland honors class in the fall semester of 1996. One of eight students who became involved with Elementary Base-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ball, Dilshad was paired for 14 weeks with a boy named Anthony Brown. She described him as "dynamic, smart and smart-mouthed, fun-loving and handsome."

"I *may* be helping him," Dilshad wrote at the end of the semester. "I may be helping him to improve his reading skills. I may be teaching him a modicum of patience. I may be showing him that higher education is a thing to strive for. I may be teaching him that mental solutions are better than physical ones. I may be changing some stereotypes for him—that Spanish people aren't the only ones to play soccer! I may be teaching him how the world is enlarged through books. I may be doing a lot of things for him, intentionally and unintentionally. I am aware of this, and I know he is happy to see me every week because of these things and more."

"But I don't think he realized his gift to me. I don't think he knows how much he is helping me. It's a 'may' when it comes to my helping him. I won't know if I have done any long-term good for a while. But it is an 'is' when it comes to him helping me. I can see and feel everyday how I have been changed by him—the way he reacts to things and the way he sees things. He may not know yet that this tutoring is a two-way street, but I aim to correct that. Anthony Brown needs to know that he has a gift, and I am glad and grateful that he is giving it to me."

The after-school reading tutor for Anthony Taylor last fall was Eric Speigel from my Maryland class. His experience was much less smooth than that of his schoolmates. Anthony often came late to tutoring, let himself be distracted, and preferred to talk about sports. Sometimes, Eric Speigel wrote:

> I left Garrison feeling that I was wasting my resources. There were so many other kids that I had gotten to know and like. Why wasn't I with one of them? But on this roller coaster ride, next week could be a great one. Dedication entails commitment through the good and bad. ...At times, I've wished I could be with one of those cute little kids that shower their tutors with affection and excitement every time they see them. I could take pictures, show them to my friends at school and say 'Here's my little buddy.' I'm sure there are many advantages to an experience like that. There have been times when I've wondered if I could have made a bigger difference [if paired] with someone who accepted and appreciated my efforts. Still, I wanted and received a realistic experience. ...These kids need someone who will be there for them week in and week out. Whether they show their appreciation is irrelevant. After all, we are here to fill one of the many voids in their lives and satisfy their needs, not worry about own needs. In filling some of the potholes and pitfalls in their own road to the future, we can only hope that it will one day be as smooth a ride as our own.

The current debate about teaching values in school might be resolved if more schools demanded community service and service learning programs. Only one state—Maryland—does. Students given chances to care for the victims of economic and social injustice will likely develop a value system that questions the people in power who let that injustice persist. That's risky. It's how revolutionaries get started, it's how a few teachers begin to wake up and realize the truth of Martin Luther King Jr.'s call: "We must encourage creative dissenters. ...We must demonstrate, teach, and preach, until the very foundations of our nation are shaken."

Ironically, the gang of exhorters on the platform at the Philadelphia volunteerism summit—Clinton, Powell, Bush, Ford—are among those of one generation who helped create the mess and despair that the creative dissenters of the next generation are now called on, as altruists and idealists, to ease. Colin Powell was a ranking part of the Pentagon establishment that saw the United Sates bankrupt itself through military spending. The $700 million a day that Congress gives the Pentagon is three times what the Peace Corps spends in a year. The current military budget is 17 times greater than the combined spending of the six nations—North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Cuba—we are instructed to worry about.

Is there no linkage between the money wasted on militarism and the money now wanted for social uplift? I don't recall Powell decrying this squandering of the nation's wealth, neither while wearing his uniform nor in his autobiography detailing the glories of his career. Now he preens about as the savior of Generation X: "Let's volunteer together to take care of our youth and help shape America's future."

No. Reshape it. What's getting underway now in the literacy programs is catch-up work that wouldn't have been necessary if the country hadn't been impoverished by the military spending binge. Jimmy Carter administered a trillion dollar military budget, yet now he troops around the globe as Mr. Peacemaker. Powell gets away with his Mr. Volunteerism number, thanks to a fawning media.

Before enticing high school and college kids to cure the ills of society, those doing the enticing could use some instruction on accountability. That, too, would be one of the benefits of volunteerism, available to both servers and served. ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tidbits & Outrages

Don't Mess with Grandma

In Moldova, transport police detained a 70-year-old woman who was carrying a hand grenade in her shopping basket—for "self defense," she explained.

Law & Odor

Jeff Pearce of Perth, Australia was recently convicted of assault for deliberately breathing on a policeman after chewing on a clove of garlic.

It Takes a Pom-Pom

Aspiring cheerleaders for the Dallas Cowboys must first pass a 20-minute general knowledge test. Questions include "Who is the U.S. Attorney General?" and "What's the name of Hillary Clinton's book?"

AP/Wide World Photos

Roller Cop

The Amsterdam police force recently became the first law enforcement agency in the world to use roller skates. The "roller patrols" will focus on shoplifters and pickpockets.

Warning: Cigarettes May be Hazardous to Your House

A discarded cigarette was deemed to be the probable cause of a fire which caused $1 million in damages to the luxury vacation home of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. President Andrew Schindler.

The Education Krisis

A newspaper ad recently run by the Milwaukee Public Schools that was entitled "High Standards Start Here" called for "proficiencey" exams and "rigourous" graduation requirements.

Use #312:

In Silver Spring, Md. a woman was charged with practicing dentistry without a license after one of her patients complained that she had pulled out his tooth, filed it, and then re-attached it with Krazy Glue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LOCAL NEWS: THE BIGGEST SCANDAL ON TV

It's shallow, it's vapid, it misleads the public—It's the local news

BY STEVEN D. STARK

TURN ON THE TELEVISION SET AT 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. in any part of America, or do the same at 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock, and you are likely to encounter one of the oddest, if not most pernicious, phenomenons on television: the local newscast. What makes these programs so strange is that they are so eerily alike from Maine to Mississippi, no matter the network affiliation. There are always the breathless promos ("Nude man found at mall: Film at 11!"). There are always the two amiable chatting anchors, usually a middle-aged man and a somewhat younger woman. There are the younger roving reporters, featured live at various points around the community or nation, where they chat up the anchors. ("Do you know why the man was wearing no clothes, Jim?" "We're working on that, Susan.") There's the joking weatherman, the jock sportscaster, and more recently, the health editor and the lifestyle reporter. In a nation of enormous diversity, there's something both comforting and appalling in knowing that no matter where you are, the local news—like the local McDonalds—is always the same.

What makes most of these newscasts pernicious is that they are at the same time so influential and so awful—at least in journalistic terms. In recent years, the local newscast has replaced the network evening news and the newspaper alike as the average American's main source of news: A study by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in 1996 found that 65 percent of all adults said they regularly watched the local TV news; only 42 percent reported that they did the same with a network newscast. In about two-thirds of all markets, according to another study, the early-evening local news shows attracted better ratings than the network newscasts that followed them—and the local news is on for a longer time. Though local newscasts have been studied far less systematically than the national news, nearly everyone who has examined their content has come away with the same conclusion. For example:

- A 1995 study of the local news in 50 major markets by the Rocky Mountain Media Watch found that crime and disaster news make up about 53 percent of the news on local newscasts—the grislier the crime, the better. ("Son shoots mother five times with bow and arrow.") Fluff—defined by the study as 'soft news, anchor chatter, teases, and celebrity items"—takes up about 31 percent of the whole newscast, on average (items such as "Girl reunited with dog" or "How to tango").
- An informal 1993 survey by *The Washington Post* of local newscasts on stations in five big cities found the percentage of stories involving crime, sex, disasters, accidents, or public fears running at anywhere from 46 to 74. In its survey, the *Post* found local newscast obsessed with murders, serial killers, snakebites, spider bites, tornadoes, mudslides, explosions, and satanic activity.
- A 1990 study published by the *Columbia Journalism Review* found that 18 of the 32 stories analyzed on local newscasts were inaccurate or misleading, and the station usually made no attempt to correct the mistakes. A report published the same year in the *L.A. Reader*, following examination of a week's worth of stories in that market, found stations routinely airing PR footage provided by companies with no acknowledg-

From Glued to the Set *by Steven D. Stark. Copyright © 1997 by Steven D. Stark. Reprinted by permission of The Free Press, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment that this was what was going on.

- In a 1991 book examining the local news, *Making Local News*, Phyllis Kaniss found, among other things, that local TV news reporters are more likely to accept their sources' viewpoints than are print reporters.
- A Chicago reporter looking at "sweeps week" on Los Angeles television found heavily promoted news stories on lesbian nuns, Geraldo Rivera's love life, and sex after 60.

As a critic once put it: The worst scandal the local news could ever uncover is itself.

Local news didn't start out this way. Until about 1970, local news—with its mix of local stories, weather, and sports delivered in a low-key broadcast—was an insignificant part of the television day. In the late '60s and early '70s, however, stations began to recognize the economic values of these newscasts. A news program is often less expensive than a dramatic show to produce, and, unlike national programming, the local station can retain the profits. Once they commenced in earnest, these newscasts began generating about one-third to half of the profits of local stations. Thus, in many markets, the local newscast started to expand—to a half-hour before the evening network news, then an hour, and in many markets to 90 minutes in the early evening and several other times throughout the day.

National network news had grown from radio, along with a concomitant duty recognized by the networks to deliver information responsibly to their viewers. Run by journalists, it was assumed these broadcasts would be loss leaders. By contrast, the local news arose because there was money to be made; the notion of what could possibly fill these hours came later, and in many cases the shows were run by television people with no use for traditional, pavement-pounding journalism.

Like the tabloid press at the turn of the century—faced with a similar dilemma about how to bring a larger audience to news—the locals frequently turned to such sensationalistic topics as crime. They also turned to the same small group of media consultants, who in turn tended to give them the same instructions whether they were in Laredo or Los Angeles. That explains the subsequent uniformity. In fact, anyone watching prime-time television knew how the medium worked in the '70s, and could have guessed the advice: Crime shows like *Kojak* attract the largest audience. Viewers respond to likable characters. All sitcoms revolve around families. It was the "genius" of these marketers to take the principles of prime-time fictional television and bring them to every local newscast in the nation, where they still remain in force. As one consultant's report put it:

> It is not surprising...that research indicates ratings rise when the broadcast is successful in exposing the listener to what he wants to hear, in the very personal way he wants to hear it. In terms of news, this means ratings are improved not when listeners are told what they should know, but what they want to hear.

In other words, news would become a form of entertainment.

The whole style had begun, of all places, on public television in the late 1960s, when KQED in San Francisco had experimented with a daily newscast for nine weeks during a local newspaper strike. For this newscast the reporters gathered at a long table, where they discussed the stories they presented in depth with an anchor. The first commercial station to adopt the practice—beginning with the local San Francisco ABC affiliate—borrowed KQED's style, not its substance. Thus "happy talk" became an early feature of the local newscast, not to highlight the news but rather the news*casters*.

According to Ron Powers, who chronicled the rise of local news in his book *The Newscasters*, this style then became the signature of many ABC-owned stations around the country, and others soon followed. One station had a typical ad campaign which went: "So good news or bad, laugh a little with your News-4 favorites: You'll feel better." The industry trotted forth the usual analysts to explain its decision. "Audiences," said one, "have diametrically opposed needs: The desire to know, and a tremendous fear of finding out what happened. The communicator has to be someone they like if he is to put the whole frightening world together for them." By 1971, *Time* was already complaining. "What counts is not how the banana men relate the news," it wrote, "but how they relate to each other."

The main competitor to happy news on the local newscircuit was the closely related concept of "action news," dubbed in many places "Eyewitness News." Also developed by consulting firms, its signature was a high story count, an increasing number of striking visuals, and exciting upbeat music. Typical consultant recommendations called for "simplifying and limiting treatment of complex news, and elimination of 'upper-class English.'" Key to all this was the presence of a personable male anchor—although if things went wrong in the ratings, he was usually the guy blamed. That may explain why New York's WNBC in its formative period for local news went through a half-dozen or so anchormen—including Jim Hartz, Gabe Pressman, John Palmer, and Frank McGee—in a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

search for the holy ratings grail. It wasn't long, of course, before the two styles merged, so that virtually every station was using "happy talk" along with the impressionistic, tabloid approach of "action news." "You must have action in the first 12 seconds," Don Hewitt, the producer of *60 Minutes*, would say one day. "It doesn't matter what the action is."

Over the years, these approaches have continued to dominate the style of local TV news, though improvements in technology have affected the mix. The use of satellites allowed stations to send more reporters "live" into the field, with the result that most newscasts eventually featured the daily obligatory story or two of reporters wandering around the crime scene with little to report but their own presence.

By the 1980s, the technology had also improved enough that many local stations could send reporters to both national and international events, to report back live. They usually managed to do that even before the network news had come on the air. In the past, the networks had restricted to their own national shows both the national and international footage they obtained—if not to preserve the quality of the reporting, then to maintain their exclusive franchise and keep ratings high. At the same time that local stations began traveling around, however, CNN broke the networks' monopoly on world and national footage by offering such feeds to the locals.

The result was that local stations began to become the average viewer's window on the whole world, rather than just the local area. The same sketchy, tabloid coverage that had characterized local events now became the trademark of national and international coverage. "Can you imagine how the civil-rights movement would have been affected if only local stations handled it?" former CBS News President Richard Salant once asked a reporter. Actually, the question might have been *if* they had covered it at all, since local stations always seemed to prefer stories like plane crashes or hurricanes, which allowed them to fly their reporters somewhere, put them on a beach in rain gear, and encourage them to babble and act fearful.

Ironically, national feeds of all sorts became so easy for local stations to pick up that they stopped doing some of the harder work of local reporting. "Why have a reporter hang around City Hall when he or she can sit in your tape room in Des Moines or wherever, monitor an incoming feed on, say, Michael Jackson leaving a New York hospital, and then report 'live from the newsroom' on the story?" a former network news executive questioningly complained to former *New York Times* editor and current magazine columnist Max Frankel.

A similar inclination to laziness and self-promotion increasingly led the locals to use "news stories" to promote entertainment shows on their own network. "Meet *The Beast* at 9, then meet the man who created it at 11!" screamed one NBC promo in New York in the '90s (*The Beast* was a made-for-TV movie.) In Washington, D.C., it was "The author of *The Beast* tells you what to fear right here in D.C.!" "You saw *Law and Order*," asked another, "but can it really happen?"

The effect of all this was to change the content of the national network newscasts themselves—which saw their ratings beginning to tumble as they faced this local threat. "After you have watched an hour of local news," Tom Bettag, an executive producer of the *CBS Evening News* asked in 1990, "why would you watch another half-hour of network?" So national anchors like Dan Rather hit the road, and the networks began becoming more tabloid themselves in an attempt to win back the audience they had lost to the locals.

By the '90s, the tail was wagging the dog: Now,

FOR A LOOK AT JUST HOW LOW LOCAL NEWS can go, check out the recent uproar in Chicago, where WMAQ recently decided to hire trash talk show host Jerry Springer as a commentator on its evening news.

The April 23 announcement earned the station a torrent of negative publicity, with the public and the press alike decrying the sad state of TV news. WMAQ anchorwoman Carol Marin's decision to resign over Springer's hiring (saying it indicated the station's news standards had deteriorated) won her glowing press coverage and a farewell ovation from co-workers at the close of her final broadcast.

True to form, Springer's opening commentary was a histrionic denouncement of Marin that included name-calling ("Walter Cronkite wannabe"), accusations of "elitist snobbery," and references to Nazis and the Holocaust.

The good news? Following Springer's debut, WMAQ's ratings fell, viewers picketed the building, and the station was swamped with protest calls. (Sources told the New York *Daily News* that, by early afternoon on the day after Springer's first show, the station had logged more than 3,700 critical calls.) Less than a week later, the controversial talk show host quit, saying the situation had gotten "too personal."

Perhaps the public has a little more sense than program directors give them credit for.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

local news was setting the journalistic standard for the networks. The result was that tabloid-like stories about Michael Jackson or Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan also became the province of national newscasts—as did the perennial local obsession with crime. Even excluding the O.J. Simpson case, the three network newscasts spent four times as many hours covering murder cases in 1994 as they had only four years earlier. In 1995, the three network newscasts broadcast 2,574 crime stories—nearly one out of every five stories run. That was four times the number of crime stories they had run as late as 1991, even though crime had actually declined in this later period.

With local stations providing an alternative to national broadcasts, newsmakers also had the option of going to them to make their case. During his presidency, George Bush often used local media to get his message across, knowing that local anchors—awed by the presidency and their own lack of national experience—would ask less-threatening questions than the network reporters. The practice continued in earnest throughout the 1992 campaign, when Bill Clinton did the same thing—beginning in the New Hampshire primary, as he circumvented national reporters who seemed to want to talk only about Gennifer Flowers.

On the one hand, these local stations do provide a venue for national figures to talk about issues when the national press tends to get bogged down talking about "insider" strategy rather than substance. On the other hand, such reports often provide virtually no critical analysis; many congressmen have been known to get their canned "news feeds" directly on the air, particularly in smaller markets. Communication it is, but journalism it isn't.

Improved technology also gave greater prominence on the local newscast to the weather—for very practical reasons often the heart of the show. Weather is only a small part of newspaper journalism, but it has been an integral part of local TV news since its inception in the 1950s. After all, the introduction of weather news permitted another commercial between segments—and, with news in those primitive days consisting entirely of a sober anchor reading a script at a desk, it allowed local news shows to introduce their first non-hard-news personalities. Joining the early ranks were New York's Tex Antoine with Uncle Weatherbee and Washington's Willard Scott, who occasionally would dress up as Robin Hood, George Washington, or whomever, and once said, "A trained gorilla could do what I do." In the 1950s some stations even turned to attractive "weather girls," one of whom once said, "The temperature in New York is 46—and me, I'm 36-26-36."

With the development of weather satellites in the '70s and '80s, however, the visuals improved greatly—allowing viewers to observe the process of weather formation in ways they couldn't before. In fact, with the hiring of meteorologists as weather forecasters, weather reporting became so good on TV that once the cable industry was up and running, one of its more successful stations proved to be the Weather Channel. In late summer, Americans would begin tracking every tropical storm, hour by hour, and in the winter they did the same with snow. "The news media, particularly if there are no other big events, tend to over-hype the storms compared to what storms actually do," Bill Gray, a professor of atmospheric science at Colorado State University once told a reporter. "You have a lot of these beautiful satellite pictures that create a lot of interest. And people have a natural interest in damage and other people's problems. It makes your own problems seem a little less."

Yet on the local news, weather would always take a back seat to crime. And studies showed that an overload of crime news tends to make viewers ever more fearful, and increasingly likely to support ever more radical measures designed to curb disorder. "What I object to is the lack of context," a local TV news reporter once said. "It all goes hurtling by, and the world is a frightening and inexplicable place."

Moreover, what gets ignored gets forgotten. "[C]overage of the environment, education, the economy, science, the arts, children, civil rights, parenting, conflict resolution, and homelessness didn't make the news today on most stations," stated the aforementioned Rocky Mountain Media Watch study, reporting on the results of its survey of a day in the life of local news. "And if it's not in the news, it's not on our public agenda."

In his book *The Newscasters*, Ron Powers suggested 20 years ago that local TV news had an obligation to sacrifice some of its profits to give its community better-informed newscasts. Yet, better-informed citizens now know to avoid local TV news for much of anything but weather and sports. In an atomized market, where wealthier viewers can turn to computers or cable (including around-the-clock local cable news in many areas), local TV news is increasingly left with a downscale audience which doesn't think that "journalism" as practiced in the *National Enquirer* or the tabloids is all that terrible. The producers of these newscasts are right when they proclaim that local TV news gives viewers what they want. It just doesn't give them what they need. ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How NEWT and his friends plan to change your life!

Newt Gingrich is setting the agenda in Washington.

Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition has an even broader plan to change daily life in America.

Together they plan a revolution.

Just one item in their revolution (Newt's word) is to win election to School Boards across the country and stop the teaching of "un-Christian" ideas. Such as evolution, tolerance toward homosexuality, secular humanism and "devil worship"—that's how Robertson describes progressive ideas!

Mother Jones magazine has been watching these guys for more than a decade.

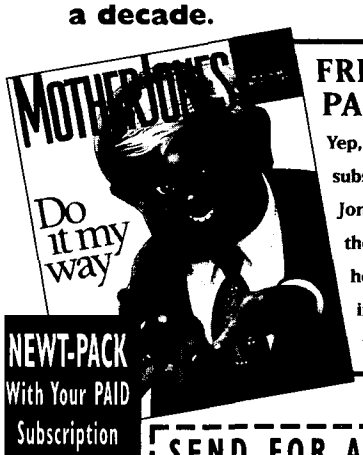
In 1984 we interviewed newly-elected Congressman Newt Gingrich and reported his spooky ideas — as well as the details of his own lifestyle that belie his public policy positions. (His first wife is still chasing him for support.)

Our early work on Newt has been quoted by the likes of the *New York Times, Washington Post, Newsweek* and the *New Yorker* since his elevation to House Speaker.

It's time to get back out in front of the news.

Gingrich, Robertson and friends are changing this country. You ought to keep up and, when the time is right, speak up.

Mother Jones will give you the best in visionary thinking, in-depth reports way ahead of the media pack, information you can use — and some laughs along the way.



FREE WITH YOUR PAID SUBSCRIPTION

Yep, you read it right. With your paid subscription we'll send you the Mother Jones files on Newt Gingrich, including the interviews from the 1980s in which he discusses how his adventures in sexual infidelity made him feel "like somebody who's in Alcoholics Anonymous."

SEND FOR A FREE ISSUE AND CATCH UP ON THE BIG PICTURE

☐ **OK!** I'm ready. Send me my free issue of Mother Jones. If I like it I'll pay just $12 for a full year (6 issues) — that's almost 50% off newsstand price! If Mother Jones isn't for me I'll just cancel, owe nothing and keep my free issue.
BONUS! With my paid order, I'll receive a NEWT-PACK **FREE**.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Mail to MOTHER JONES, P.O. Box 469024, Escondido, CA 92046-9024 or call 1-800-GET MOJO.
Allow 4-6 weeks for your first issue. Basic subscription rate is $18 for one year. Canada: Prepay CDN $18. Foreign: Prepay $22 in U.S. funds.

5DBU2

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Noriega Tells All—Almost

This kiss-and-tell memoir leaves out some inconvenient—and incriminating—details

By Robert A. Pastor

THE MEMOIRS OF MANUEL NORIEGA: America's Prisoner
By Manuel Noriega and Peter Eisner
Random House, $25

GEN. COLIN POWELL, THE Mr. Clean of American politics, once described Panamanian Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega as pure "evil." To reach the pinnacle of power in Panama, Noriega surmounted many obstacles, but none compare to the challenge of his memoir—to defend a reputation that seems indefensible.

Noriega was a brutal, corrupt dictator with a dossier overflowing with actual and alleged crimes that include pushing a priest out of a helicopter, beheading a political rival, forcing two of Panama's presidents to resign, and trafficking in drugs. On December 20, 1989, after two American soldiers were shot for running a roadblock next to Noriega's headquarters, President George Bush ordered a massive attack against Panama. Noriega was captured and brought to Miami where, in 1992, he was convicted of drug smuggling and sentenced to 40 years in prison.

Now, in an unusual memoir, Noriega comes to his own defense, finally telling all that he had previously threatened to tell. With the help of Peter Eisner, a talented journalist who has covered Latin America for 15 years, Noriega's story is readable and, at times, credible.

In the book's introduction, Eisner calls the invasion of Panama "completely unjustified" and an "abominable abuse of power." In his view, Noriega was unfairly demonized because "the Bush administration wanted to invade." Why? Eisner and Noriega offer numerous answers to this question, all of which can be summarized in three arguments.

The first is that Bush wanted to retake control of the Canal. But this argument was not persuasive at the time and is even less so today. Just a month after the invasion, Panamanians assumed predominant control over Canal operation, and that control will become complete in 2000. No one in either the Bush or Clinton administrations has suggested that the United States should take back the Canal. Indeed, despite opinion polls showing that 75 percent of Panamanians want U.S. forces to remain in Panama, both governments have shown little interest in completing the talks to extend a small U.S. presence beyond the year 2000.

The second reason is that Panama's "civilian elites" convinced Bush to help them get rid of the lower-class Noriega. Although its true that the upper class hated Noriega, the invasion can hardly be classified as an elitist plot. Panamanian polls showed that 92 percent of the population supported the invasion—not because they liked Americans, but because they despised Noriega.

The third explanation is that the United States hated Noriega because he said "no" to the American colossus. He repeatedly rejected efforts by the Reagan and Bush administrations to enlist him in the war against the Sandinistas, and he resisted U.S. efforts to drive him from power. Noriega's defiance made Bush seem so weak that Bush felt compelled to act.

But the fact is that Noriega usually said "yes." He helped Reagan in his war against the Sandinistas, and Noriega describes many missions he undertook at the CIA's request. It was not Noriega's rejection that led Reagan to impose sanctions against his regime; rather indictments against Noriega for drug-trafficking compelled the U.S. to change its policy.

The one part of Noriega and Eisner's thesis that's

ROBERT A. PASTOR, *a professor of political science at Emory University, was National Security Adviser for Latin America during the Carter administration.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

harder to dismiss is one they cite from Gen. Fred Woerner, head of the Panama-based U.S. Southern Command until late 1989. Woerner characterized the U.S. invasion as "a response to U.S. domestic considerations. It was the wimp factor." Having been criticized for his failure to remove Noriega, Bush had to act. Woerner also says that he "never saw any credible evidence of drug trafficking involving General Noriega." That is a surprising statement, although Eisner notes that virtually all of the witnesses who testified against Noriega were felons paid by the U.S. government and who had their sentences reduced or suspended.

Noriega and Eisner agree on these charges, but Noriega's memoir includes a string of other accusations that Eisner, to his credit, evaluates in an extensive "afterword," based on other documents and interviews, including one with President Bush.

A M.A.N.'s Life

He liked to refer to himself by his initials, M.A.N. —English for "*hombre*." Short, brown, and with such bad skin he was often called "pineapple face" (though not in his presence), Noriega had the added burden of being illegitimate. Soon after his birth in Panama City, his mother, a young peasant woman, took him with her to the southern province of Darien to attend to her dying mother. Following her own mother's death, Noriega's mother contracted malaria and tuberculosis and dispatched her baby to live with her godmother in Panama City.

What is most interesting about this troubled background is that one can only piece it together after reading two obscure appendices at the end of the book, written by a half-brother and another acquaintance. Noriega himself begins his history by writing: "Our family lived humbly, but there was food and I remember being a happy boy."

Noriega studied hard and was accepted by a Peruvian military college. Upon returning to Panama, he found a country dependent on the Canal, foreign trade, and the U.S. military. Governed since its founding in 1903 by a small, predominantly white elite, there were few avenues for advancement by the poorer people of mixed racial background. Like other militaries in Latin America, the National Guard of Panama was one of the few institutions in which people of color could be promoted.

Still, Noriega went to work for the International Geodesic Service as a cartographer and engineer and claims he would never have joined the National Guard had it not been for a chance encounter with Omar Torrijos, a handsome, charismatic officer, who would change Panama and its relationship with the United States more than any leader in the 20th century.

A child of school teachers, Torrijos graduated from the Salvadoran military academy, and on returning to Panama, rose quickly through the ranks of the National Guard, recruiting educated young lower class men like Noriega along the way. When a military coup in 1968 unseated Panama's President Arnulfo Arias, a populist with fascist sympathies and racist inclinations, the officers asked Torrijos to take charge. He remained in control until his death in an airplane crash in 1981.

Noriega found in Torrijos not only the father he never had, but a leader who transformed Panama: "For the first time, people from the country's poor neighborhoods...rose up from poverty into the middle class with newfound social status, no longer pariahs in their own country." Torrijos had little respect for democracy, but under pressure from his friend Jimmy Carter, he gradually began to liberalize the political system. Most of all, he negotiated the Panama Canal Treaties with Carter, thus giving the country a sense of national purpose and dignity.

Torrijos found in Noriega a person of unquestioned loyalty and reliability. When Torrijos was almost toppled in 1969, Noriega organized a risky but triumphal return for his mentor. Torrijos believed that the United States was behind the aborted coup, and he turned to Noriega to establish a serious intelligence capability for the first time in Panama's history.

Whose Intelligence?

Torrijos shut down all contacts with the United States. He was smart enough to know, however, that he would drive the U.S. government to desperation if he kept it completely in the dark, so he opened up just a few channels. Noriega writes that he became Torrijos's single channel with the CIA, but Torrijoslet several people think that each was the only channel.

Relations with the CIA began improving, to the point that in late 1975 or early 1976, according to Noriega, CIA Director George Bush delivered a sensitive message to Torrijos. Bush was concerned that U.S. politics was delaying negotiations on a Canal Treaty, and proposed that the CIA train a group of Panamanian military "in demolition tactics and then send them back to the Canal Zone for a high-profile but harmless bit of sabotage, which would add urgency to the canal negotiations."

On December 8, 1976, Noriega met with Bush in Washington. According to the Panamanian Foreign Minister, who attended the meetings, there was a brief exchange on the bombings and indirect references to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spies. Noriega claims that Bush wanted the meeting to be reassured that Noriega would not disclose that the CIA was involved in the bombings. Noriega writes that he "told him not to worry." (When Eisner checked the story, Bush denied it.)

The idea that the CIA would have trained Panamanians to attack the Canal area is implausible, but a legitimate question could be asked as to why Bush met with him at that time. By this time, the CIA had evidence of Noriega's involvement in the bombings and other unsavory acts. One reason might have been that the U.S. owed Noriega a favor for a mission that he had recently undertaken in Cuba at the request of the CIA. His job had been to persuade Fidel Castro to release the captain of a ship that helped Cuban exiles attack villages on the coast of Cuba. Noriega takes great pride in this success, which he achieved by persuading Castro that such a favor would help Panama in its Canal Treaty negotiations with the U.S.

It is not easy to understand why the U.S. government would ask Noriega to be its intermediary with Castro. Noriega tries to use his book to show that he was an effective instrument of the CIA, particularly during the tenure of director Bill Casey, who used him at least two more times to convey messages to Castro—once to release some Cuban exiles in prison and again on the eve of the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada. Noriega believes that, had Casey lived, he would have prevented the U.S. invasion of Panama.

The real story, however, is in what Noriega omitted—from the sources of his wealth to the brutal way he trained and dispatched his goon squads. Also omitted is the fact that the Nixon administration considered assassinating Torrijos in 1971-72 and that the Carter administration stopped paying Noriega because it saw no reason to trust him. Of course, both episodes would have contradicted Noriega's thesis that he was a close ally of the United States until Reagan and Bush turned against him.

His Greatest Blunders

Noriega also fails to offer a credible explanation of his reaction to the 1989 Panamanian elections and the invasion.

I helped organize the Carter-Ford observation of the '89 elections. When I arrived in Panama, I was given, by sources I judged to be close to the CIA, a hefty volume describing how Noriega would manipulate the election. It turned out to be bogus; Noriega had no plan. However, we had one, based on a "quick count" that permitted us to determine by the early morning after the election that Noriega's candidates had lost by a sizeable margin. He discovered this rather late in the game and tried to shut down the count with his usual brutality; then he replaced the results with obvious forgeries. Carter and I tried to meet with him to persuade him to accept the results and offer a face-saving "exit," but he refused to see us.

In his memoir, Noriega blames me for pressuring him to accept international observers: "We had been reluctant to do so...I had argued weeks earlier with Pastor and others, that given the United States' attitude, this would just be another infringement on our rights." In our conversation, Noriega, who was half-drunk, at one point began stomping on a table and began throwing things at me. But he did agree to let observers come. Some Bush administration officials opposed Carter's monitoring of the election, fearing he was so wedded to the Canal Treaties that he would conceal the election fraud. In fact, Carter's announcement that the opposition had won and his denunciation of the fraud left Noriega no alternative but to annul the election. This left his government without any legitimacy, and opened the way for OAS condemnation.

Similarly, the U.S. intelligence community believed Noriega had a detailed plan to resist a U.S. invasion. But either this plan was also a fake, or Noriega simply didn't implement it. In his account, Noriega stretches credulity when he describes the cheers that greeted him as he marched along the main avenue of Colon on the eve of the invasion. Later, he describes his heroic fire-fights against vastly superior U.S. forces, comparing himself to de Gaulle fleeing the Nazis. In contrast, his principal aide later admitted that, when the invasion occurred, Noriega was with a prostitute in a hotel near the airport and that he was drunk, incoherent, and scared until he finally escaped to the Vatican Embassy.

Eisner calls Noriega "a useful tool." In another book, John Dinges similarly describes him as "our man in Panama." Both characterizations have a small grain of truth but are far from the mark. There were moments in the Nixon and Reagan eras when the United States turned to Noriega for some specific task; these were serious mistakes, displaying a shortsightedness that led both administrations into the destructive blunders of Watergate and Iran-Contra. But the United States was not responsible for Noriega. It was foolish to deal with him during those moments, but he was no one's tool. He was his own person, and he knew the code of his profession: He used others as others used him.

In the end, whatever one thinks of the U.S. invasion, the world is better off with Noriega behind bars.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Wasteland

Beneath a veneer of environmental consciousness, Mexico continues to pillage its natural resources

By Esther Schrader

THINK OF MEXICO AND THE environment, and familiar images come to mind: the shame of the sludge-filled Rio Grande and the brown layer of smog over Mexico City, the relieving beauty of white beaches and crystal-blue oceans in tourist escapes such as Cancun and Cozumel.

But while Americans are quick to decry the environmental devastation of Mexico's cities and industrial zones, the key to understanding how this country's astonishing array of natural resources has been forever damaged lies where you might least expect it—in those very same beaches favored by pale-skinned travelers and environmentalists on vacation.

Cancun, after all, was an island inhabited by three fishermen and accessible only by boat before the Mexican government and foreign investors set their eyes on its crescent-shaped shore three decades ago. They dredged the ocean to enlarge the beaches, built a highway across the wetlands, and used the earth to fill in a vast lagoon. The isolated isle was transformed into an absurd mass of grand hotels, clogged sewers, and urban-style decay that most wildlife has long since fled.

The government and investors were able to build Cancun and a series of other resorts that scarred Mexico's coastline because of a central truth about the country to our south: Whatever environmental consciousness Mexicans once had was subsumed long ago by a culture of resource exploitation, deceit, and corruption at the highest levels of government and industry. And as long as this country remains as deeply undemocratic as it is today, Mexico's power wielders will continue to rape its treasures of air, land, and sea. The poor, meanwhile, worry more about feeding their families than saving a tree.

ENDANGERED MEXICO: Environment on the edge
By Joel Simon
Sierra Books, $27

A new book, *Endangered Mexico: Environment on the Edge*, by Joel Simon, an American freelance journalist who lives in Mexico City, takes the reader on a disheartening tour of centuries of attacks on Mexico's resources. Writing simply and passionately, Simon argues that environmental degradation is both the cause and consequence of Mexico's economic crisis. In linking Mexico's failed environmental policies to its political and social instability, Simon tackles a theme that up to now has been broadly explored only by a narrow band of environmentalists.

Unfortunately, the work is less impressive when Simon surveys some of the politics and history that have been better analyzed by others before him. And although Simon attempts to communicate how central the story of the environment is to grasping Mexico's tragic history, he comes up short. On the thorny issue of how to reverse the environmental damage, the author is almost mute.

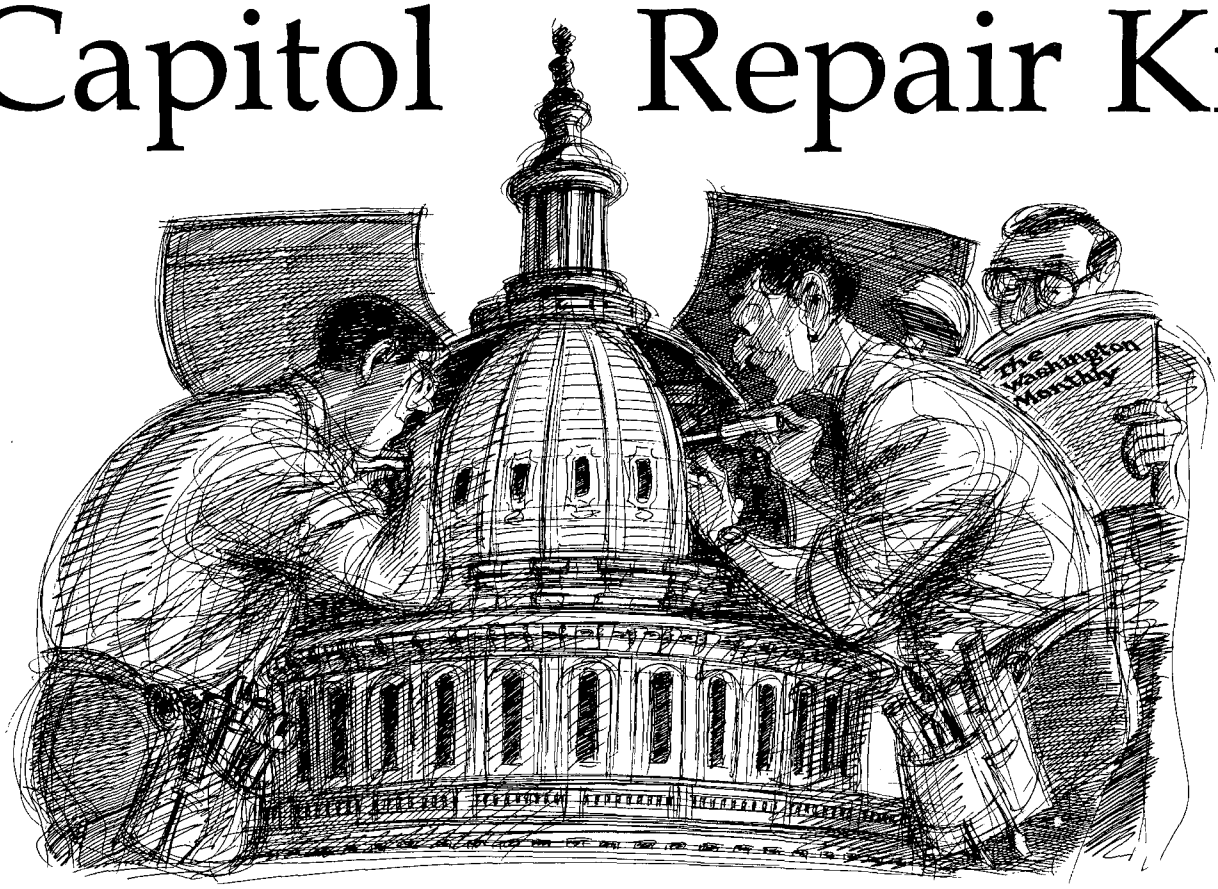
Simon strains to make the case that environmental destruction south of the border is directly relevant to people in the United States. But his segues into discussions of illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and trade policy will probably fail to convince most readers that Mexico's tragedy is our own. The truth is, if you don't care about the Mexican environment on its own terms, because of what it means for Mexico and for the Earth, you are probably never going to crack open this book.

But you should care. As a journalist who lived in Mexico City and wrote frequently about the country's polluted oceans, farmland, and cities, I saw ample reason to despair. (I met Simon while he was in the capital writing his book, and should note that an article I wrote on pesticide abuse is among the hundreds of sources he cites.) So, whatever its shortcomings, I applaud the book's sincere effort at unraveling the causes and consequences of Mexico's shameful environmental record.

ESTHER SCHRADER, *a reporter with the* Los Angeles Times, *is the former Mexico correspondent for the* San Jose Mercury News.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Capitol Repair Kit



While Washington burns with partisan rhetoric, we cool the air with clear-headed, innovative solutions to some of the nation's most unyielding problems. And we have fun doing it. **The Washington Monthly** explores the quirks, cons, and paralysis that too often underpin American politics—then we offer a sensible way out. *The New York Observer* says we are the magazine "to which anyone who gives a damn about this country must subscribe."

"... holds up a deadly accurate mirror to the Washington political culture, exposing its hypocrisies, stupidities, and unexpected triumphs." —*Chicago Tribune*

SUBSCRIBE NOW AND SAVE!

❑ YES! Enter my subscription for a full year (10 issues) to **The Washington Monthly** for only $29.50.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ___ Zip _____

❑ Payment enclosed ❑ Bill me later

Charge my ❑ VISA ❑ MasterCard

Credit Card # _____ Exp. _____

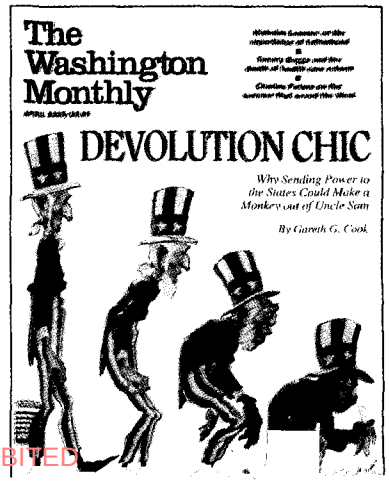
The Washington Monthly

Box 587

Mount Morris, IL 61054

For Canadian and other foreign subscriptions add $7. Please remit U.S. funds.

A7601



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Trouble in Paradise

What makes the story of Mexico's environmental devastation particularly tragic is the abundance of its natural heritage. The third most biologically diverse nation on the planet, Mexico is home to more than 30,000 species of plants—more than half of which are found nowhere else on earth. In the jungles of Chiapas, rare butterflies flutter past birds and reptiles native only to Mexico. In the waters off Baja California, gray whales give birth in an annual watery dance. Clear, deep rivers rush through the red walls of Barranca del Cobre, a series of canyons that eclipses in size our own Grand Canyon. Endangered giant sea turtles lumber up the beaches of Oaxaca each autumn to leave their eggs.

But that fragile legacy has been under increasing attack for the last four centuries. As authors before him have done, Simon chronicles how first the Spaniards, and later the Mexican government, annihilated thousands of varieties of Mexican flora and fauna, and how the Spanish version of taming nature by building cities and vast public works, and introducing foreign animals and plants, forever altered the natural balance in which the pre-Columbian Indians lived.

The book is at its most compelling, however, when Simon moves on to what he can describe with his own eyes. Again and again, he lets the reader taste his own horror at what he sees before him. Following the open sewer line that drains 23,200 gallons of raw sewage and industrial waste out of Mexico City every second of every day, Simon describes a canal of "thick black sludge, the consistency of syrup," that seems not to flow but "to percolate."

That sense of genuine dismay is the book's greatest strength. As a journalist, Simon cannot and does not claim scientific expertise. He acknowledges being deeply influenced by the extremely small group of middle- and upper-class Mexicans who make saving the environment their full-time job. His book owes a great deal, perhaps more than Simon acknowledges, to Homero Aridjis, an internationally recognized Mexican poet who is also the country's most famous environmentalist. In nearly every chapter, Simon is guided by dedicated environmentalists working under extremely difficult conditions. Often they are part of Aridjis's network of friends.

That reliance is understandable, given the Mexican government's indifference to the natural world, and the pervasiveness of that attitude throughout the rest of Mexican society. But in a study purporting to stick to the facts, Simon's dependency on the environmentalists is also dangerous. Because accurate statistics are astonishingly hard to come by in Mexico, Simon is forced to rely on hearsay from environmentalists, published reports by other U.S. journalists, themselves sometimes based on shaky data, and often wildly conflicting scientific studies. In his discussion of water use in Mexico City, for example, he cites two vastly different figures on the same page for how much the city's subsidized water service contributes to the Mexican government's deficit.

While Mexican government efforts to cover up the mess are often comical, the book would have benefited from an exploration of how officials answer Simon's charges. Give the Mexican government enough rope, and it will hang itself.

Beneath the Surface

Simon uncovers Mexico's deepest truth when he drives into a chain of mountains once blanketed with dense vegetation. Coming over a rise, he spies what at first appears to be a vast forest. Getting closer, he writes, "the forest revealed itself as a veneer, a tree theme park."

This veneer is an apt description of much of Mexico today—on the outside a democracy and on the inside Latin America's most enduring dictatorship. On the surface America's newest trading partner, underneath it is a land where drug-trafficking money is deeply enmeshed in the nation's biggest investment projects. Pressured by international opinion and by its eagerness to increase its trading role with the United States, the Mexican government in recent years has spent millions of dollars on high-profile environmental research. Mexican government experts regularly attend international conferences devoted to saving the environment.

Mexico's environmental laws do their part to preserve the veneer. On paper, the country is deeply regulated, in many ways more so than even the United States. Dozens of laws and hundreds of regulations were passed by the Mexican Congress over the last two decades, most in a flurry to impress U.S. lawmakers into granting Mexico entry into the North American Free Trade Agreement.

But those laws are rarely enforced. While trade in endangered species is strictly prohibited in Mexico, go to Mexico City's Sonora Market any day to see rare parrots, monkeys, leopards, and even jaguars for sale. The government mandates that industrial waste be strictly controlled and treated, but the Rio Grande flows thick with syringes and chemicals drained from border factories.

The Mexican people share blame with their gov-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ernment for what they have wrought. In Mexico, peasants think nothing of cutting down trees in protected forests when they can earn enough by doing so to feed their families. Upper-class Mexicans get around laws that prohibit driving on certain days of the week by buying extra cars and driving a different one each day. Throwing trash on the ground is a daily offering in the lives of most Mexicans.

In the southeast corner of Mexico, one of the world's great rainforests is slowly dying—the victim of colonization by generations of peasants who have torn down countless trees with the encouragement of the government. Despite the well-catalogued threat to the rainforest, Simon points out that neither the authorities nor the local peasants have good reasons to stop the devastation. "No one," he writes, "is advocating for the jungle." In doing so, he pinpoints the enduring tragedy of the Mexican landscape.

Smart Sex

How do we preserve the best of the sexual revolution, while remedying the worst?

By Scott Shuger

PROMISCUITIES
By Naomi Wolf
Random House, $23

An aspect of political correctness that is particularly troubling from a public policy perspective is its hostility to distinctions among and within different social groups, distinctions often crucial for formulating and implementing solutions. Thus, even if Group A has a pronounced and disproportional tendency towards problematic Behavior B, the typical blue-ribbon commission report or party platform document will do its level best to moss over this news with lots of time spent on the non-A's who B, even if this less-prominent activity verges on statistical insignificance. This is the logic that made it too difficult for too long to discuss the growth of AIDS as somehow more related to drug-users and bisexuals than to the rest of the general population. And the logic that still clouds discussions of race and crime.

Another politically inconvenient differential that this leveling logic has fuzzed over with a vengeance is this: Sexuality (especially at a young age) is more personally and socially toxic when exercised by women than when exercised by men. Compared to a time—say, 1950—when women were encouraged to be (and were) far less sexually free than men, we now have stratospheric rates of unplanned births, births out of wedlock, births to teenaged mothers, pregnancy-related high school dropouts, low birth-weight and diseased newborns, abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases.

Most of these differences exist because sexually free women have a greater risk of getting pregnant. But there are other, perhaps more mysterious, damaging consequences of increased sexualization that also impact women more than men. For instance, according to recent studies by the Institute of Medicine and the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the rise in sexually transmitted diseases disproportionately affects women, who are substantially more susceptible than men to the diseases themselves, and also to their complications, such as infertility and uro-genital cancer.

And put a five-story poster of Marky Mark in his underpants above Times Square and only a negligible portion of the peer male population will do more sit-ups, take steroids, or otherwise change their lifestyles. But a poster of Kate Moss up there in hers is generally thought to encourage large numbers of young women to get caught up in anorexia, bulimia, and other life-threatening psychological disorders. Similarly, when the reader learns in Jeffrey Toobin's book on the O.J. case that all four of the Brown sisters "had breast implants, but not one had a college degree," it comes to mind that the two developments are probably not unrelated, that the connection is probably not all that rare for women, and that a similar one would be rather rare for men.

What 1950 had going for it that is for the most part no longer operative today was what we might call the Official Virtue System (OVS), according to which

Scott Shuger *is a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

female virginity before marriage was publicly much prized. In many ways, the leading social policy takes on sex in recent years, from Charles Murray on welfare to William Bennett's virtue books to Dr. Laura's *Ten Stupid Things Women Do to Mess Up Their Lives*, can be viewed primarily as calls for reinstating this system.

The problem is, though, that in addition to providing excellent social controls, the OVS was also unfair: It winked at the sexual adventures of single men and endorsed the formation of a class of women—prostitutes and other sex workers—whose primary function was to service them and suffer the consequences. And it was repressive: Women's sexual needs were downplayed and often ignored completely.

So even if we could somehow go back to the OVS, it wouldn't be right. A very interesting question and a central one of sexual politics is: Is there another fairer, less repressive way to reinstate (many of) the virtues of the Official Virtue System?

Promiscuities is a valuable attempt to work out a "Yes" answer to this question, and it uses sexual narrative to build towards its policy prescription. Wolf, who was raised in a middle class Jewish/academic/bohemian San Francisco family and came of sexual age in the '70s, tries to capture the particular flavor of that passage by drawing on her own sexual history and those of her teenaged friends. As filtered through her fine prose, it's a moving and often scary trip, sort of a *Ten Stupid Things I Did to Almost Mess Up My Life*. The list includes a physically abusive relationship at age 14, losing her virginity in a seedy hotel at age 15, drug abuse, and being pawed by a professor she revered. Although this last encounter is unfortunately so common that it seems a cliché, Wolf's description of what was really wrong about it made my heart hurt. "My manuscript lay dead on the table," she writes. "I felt emptier than I ever had been, and sore—even more sore than I would be when I found, at the end of the term, that he'd lowered my grade. I was sore in exactly the place where my creative self-regard, still so new, had just begun to seed."

Wolf often punctuates her revelatory material with historical and anthropological excursions. Some are more successful than others. For instance, her use of Margaret Mead's conclusions about female sexuality in the Pacific Islands to help articulate the sexual predicament of the women of her generation was excellent. But a 14-page stretch covering the zig-zags of scientific theories about the clitoris and its connection to sexual arousal struck me as unnecessarily digressive to the point of being show-offy, and worse still, as marked by forced, cutesy humor, the point of which usually seemed to be what dim bulbs male sex scientists can be. And besides, is it really big news that men (or women, for that matter) are somewhat confused about the physiological details of female desire?

The Third Wave

Wolf will no doubt be commended for the bravery of the book's confessional side, which is in fact crucial for the way she pre-empts the political correctness trap: A *man* who wrote a book disclosing these sorts of details about women's sex lives as a basis for reform wouldn't get much of a hearing. But Wolf's use of her material is not as probative as it might have been. For instance, she says of her sexual education that "not at the clinic, at school, in our synagogue, or anywhere in pop culture did this message come through clearly to us: sexual activity comes with responsibilities that are deeper than personal." And she describes the events immediately preceding her first intercourse this way: "A civics class drove me over the edge. The thought of plowing through the electoral college—which, in its stubborn irrationality, seemed to represent all the rigidity and hopelessness of the adult world closing in on me—was finally too much." Maybe Wolf's upbringing and schooling had all these shortcomings, but she never quite brings herself to admit that (with the exception of the professor's unwanted advances) sex is something she *did*, not something that happened to her. In focusing on the operant cultural forces, Wolf's narrative tends to shortshrift her accountability. While doing the hard thing of describing her past, she doesn't fully own up to it.

Having said all this, it's still true that Wolf's stories do indeed provide powerful evidence for her acute observation that in the status quo culture, "men were deciding for us if we were women. Heck: *teenage boys* were deciding for us if we were women." In Wolf's view, changing this feature is the key to reform.

But Wolf is a so-called "third wave" feminist, so her approach here is more irenic than alienating. If the motto of the first wave (Friedan and Steinem, say) was "women have a problem" and the motto of the second (Dworkin and Brownmiller, say) was "men are the problem," Wolf's basic approach has always been more on the order of "women can fashion solutions, and can ally with men to do so."

Under the male-oriented OVS, single female sexuality was publicly denied and privately encouraged. The plausible idea undergirding the OVS is that publicly, culturally encouraging female sexuality leads inexorably to the whole nasty nexus of problems listed above: high rates of out-of-wedlock births, abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, etc., and to boot,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

women feeling besieged and guilty about it all. Wolf's idea for cutting this Gordian knot is to hold that if women were somehow publicly and culturally to take charge of their sexuality, they could be sexual without being so prone to these consequences.

The vehicle she advocates for bringing this about is a public, even quasi-ceremonial rite of passage from girlhood to womanhood, in which adult women teach their younger counterparts technical sex information—which would include an emphasis on "petting"—in return for promises to postpone intercourse until they feel safe and ready, never to have sex without being fully conscious, or to use sex to get love, status, or money. (As a martial artist, I was glad to note that the rites would include the teaching of self-defense, because real deferral requires real deterrence.)

Wolf envisions this rite as built around female-only retreats away from daily life. Skeptics will be quick to portray this as girl talk gone mad—"Join the Sex Scouts and get a merit badge in 3rd Base"—but as Wolf notes in some detail, this kind of approach has been viable in many different (primarily non-Western) cultures, so it is certainly worth considering. At the very least, it has this advantage over the OVS: In recognizing female gratification and distinguishing it from intercourse, it treats the emerging sex drive of young single women (and collaterally, of young single men) not only as real but also as a continuum capable of being managed, whereas the OVS treats it as an On-Off switch to be (officially) left in the Off position, but with not much of a plan for when it's flipped On. And as Wolf points out, whether we like it or not, in our society young women already widely engage in a much less desirable rite of passage: getting pregnant too soon.

However, there is an important element that is fundamental to improving the way our culture manages young female (and male) sex to which Wolf seems a little blind. Just what that is can be gleaned from Wolf's sex tales by negation. At one point, she sums up the ground rules of the house she grew up in this way: "I couldn't have my new boyfriend, Martin, spend the night if I didn't clean my room…." She describes her routine with another boyfriend thus: "We would shower together in his parents' bathroom…" And one of Wolf's friends relates how she lost her virginity as a high school junior at a classmate's home high on acid "right in line with the whole parents-aren't-there-during-what's-going-on kind of thing." The major point I wish Wolf had seen and made is that no matter what direction sex reform for young people takes, it must include the reinstatement of the social safety device that was at the core of the OVS: strong parents.

The Washington Monthly

Journalism Award

APRIL 1997

JONATHAN ALTER

Powell's New War

Newsweek

AND

MICHAEL J. GERSON AND STEVEN WALDMAN

Do do-gooders do much good?

and

The case for paid 'volunteering'

U.S. News & World Report

It took courage for the editors of these magazines to devote their covers to stories about volunteerism, a subject unlikely to produce sellouts at newsstands around the country. But it is a subject that is crucially important at a time when competent and caring volunteers are desperately needed to help educate our children. It is important enough to merit neither the squishy sentimentality of the left nor arrogant dismissal from the right—but the constructive though tough-minded examination provided by these articles.

THE MONTHLY JOURNALISM AWARD is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including two copies of the article or broadcast text) to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Nominations for stories run in May are due June 2.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Political Booknotes

Dry—With a Twist

by Sandra McElwaine

READERS WILL BE RELIEVED TO learn that "no animals were harmed in the making of" *Wry Martinis*—a delicious compilation of Christopher Buckley's writings in such magazines as *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and *Forbes FYI*.

Some of the highlights (with chapter titles in quotes):

"Royal Eavesdropping." Charles and Camilla on the phone.

Camilla: I'm lying here in my Wellies and not a stitch else.

Charles: Well, I suppose it's better than what they've got me "inspecting" tomorrow, at seven-bloody-fifteen in the bloody a.m. Bloody poultry plant.

Camilla: But it's so lonely here. Just me and my Wellies...it feels so empty without you.

Charles: I'll tell you what empty is. The inside of her skull. Knock, knock, is anyone bloody home?

Camilla: Oh, darling, how frustrating for you.

Charles: Then she announced she was going to kill herself—

Camilla: What again? With the lemon peeler?

Charles: Oh no, with a soup ladle. This time she meant business.

WRY MARTINIS
by Christopher Buckley
Random House, $22

"Apartment Hunter," written after the *New York Post* reported that O.J. Simpson was contemplating a move to NYC, includes excerpts from letters of recommendation the Juice submitted to a pricey New York cooperative.

From Robert Kardashian: I have known Mr. Simpson for many years, I would describe him as a devoted family man. The crime problem in Brentwood persuades him that it is time to look elsewhere, to New York, with the children where they can have a "normal" upbringing.

From Johnie Cochran: His only desire right now, apart from seeing that the Colombian drug dealers who slew his ex-wife and her companion are brought to justice, is to raise his children in an atmosphere of serenity and security.

From Alan Dershowitz: Another of my clients, Claus Von Bulow, lived on Fifth Avenue, and my visits to his apartment brought considerable social stature to his co-tenants.

From A.C. Cowlings: He's got a gun to his head. You better let him come live in your building. Be cool with this.

The response from the Cooperative Association: The board, recalling your statements regarding your activities on the night of June 12, 1994, took note of your predilection for nocturnal golfing on the premises. The board felt rather strongly that nocturnal golfing is inappropriate in a Fifth Avenue duplex, and therefore decided to pass on your application with the keenest regret.

"Lenin For Sale" created an international contretemps.

"It has come to our attention through private channels that the Soviet Union is preparing to make a very unusual, indeed unprecedented, offering, the embalmed remains of V.I. Lenin," wrote Buckley. "The reserve is set at $15 million. The winning bidder will be contacted within three days. As a conversation piece it would have no equal. You might have some explaining to do to the lady of the home, but the item is fairly compact and could be accommodated to fit most large dens."

Peter Jennings aired the story, and the Russians went ballistic. The phrases, "international incident," "brazen lie," and "serious provocation" were tossed around.

When Jennings retracted the story, he told journalists he had believed the report because it had come from *Forbes*, which he regarded "up to now as a responsible news organization."

Other news organizations expressed outrage and bemusement. One went so far as to demand Buckley be "drummed out of the international press corps."

Postscript: Six months later there was a story in *The Washington Post* saying the Kremlin had been "inundated with bids" ranging from $10,000 to $27 million for the corpse. Russian officials finally regained their sense of humor and told the *Post* everyone who submitted a bid would receive a polite letter declining the offer, but thanking them for their interest.

"Modest Proposals," deals with the complications of mad cow disease.

Berlin, N.H.—Patrick J. Buchanan today proposed that the United States import the 4.7 million British cows affected by mad cow disease and deploy them across the U.S.-Mexican border to deter illegal immigrants.

Washington—Mayor Marion Barry today offered to use Britain's mad cows to fill District of Columbia potholes. The one problem, he said, is that there are only 4.7 million cows and the District has 7.8 million potholes.

Fairfax, Va.—The National Rifle Association today announced that it has offered to send its entire 3.3 million membership over to England to assist with its massive cow-culling effort. NRA executive Wayne LaPierre said that if Britain did not have such stringent gun-control laws, "they'd have been able to nip this problem at the start." He called on Congress to immediately repeal the ban on some type of assault rifles, including the .50-caliber Elsie Eliminator, so that the membership can "do the job right."

Oak Brook, Ill.—The McDonald's Corporation announced today its plans to introduce a new line of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sandwiches next month called Mad Macs.

"My Own Private Sunday School" describes a conversation between Buckley and his 6-year-old daughter, Caitlin.

Caitlin (sweetly): Dad?

Dad: Yeah, honey?

Caitlin: Does everyone die?

Dad: Say, how 'bout a Flintstones pop-up ice cream bar?

Caitlin: But Dad, am I going to die?

Dad: Well, uh, I guess everyone dies. I mean, it's part of...what's your favorite part in "The Rescuers Down Under?"

Caitlin: But what happens after you die?

You can postpone this moment, but you can't avoid it. Ultimately, the important thing is to remain true to your convictions. If you lie, they'll pick up on it and never trust you again. Which is why, as an agnostic Dad—difficult as it was—I looked her right in the eye and said, "You go straight to heaven."

SANDRA MCELWAINE *is a Washington-based journalist.*

Change Comes Slowly

by Jon Meacham

FOR SOUTHERNERS, HISTORY IS as much a pastime as bourbon-drinking and football: even all these years distant, we can still wreck dinner parties with passionate arguments about whether Bragg or Forrest could have turned the tide. So this is an especially interesting moment in the old Confederacy, a year of two important anniversaries in our second civil war—the struggle against Jim Crow. It was 40 years ago this fall that President Eisenhower had to send federal troops to integrate Central High in Little Rock, a conflict that marked the emergence of the power of network television by bringing the spectacle of white riots against black children to a nation just beginning, really, to understand the scope of the Southern problem. And it was 35 years ago that James Meredith tried to enroll at the University of Mississippi, a seemingly simple act that forced Eisenhower's successor, John Kennedy, to order U.S. soldiers into Oxford to prevent anarchy.

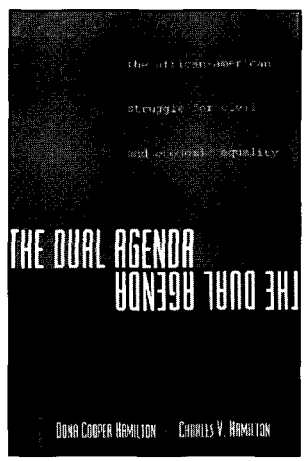
THE BAND PLAYED DIXIE: Race and the Liberal Conscience at Ole Miss
by Nadine Cohodas
The Free Press, $27.50

Both milestones are prompting journalists to ask the inevitable How Far Have We Come? question. On television, get ready for the old black-and-white images of John Chancellor reporting from Arkansas and of mobs of crew-cut crackers (I can say that; I come from Tennessee, and am married to a Mississippian) rushing into lines of helmeted infantrymen in Oxford. Historical anniversaries have a kind of liturgical significance: they force us to review the drama of our past and figure out what lessons we ought to draw from what has gone before. In the case of civil rights and the South, there are two overarching points that come out of the domestic passion play of the '50s and '60s. The first is that despite its current standing in the

THE DUAL AGENDA

RACE AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES OF CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

Dona Cooper Hamilton and Charles V. Hamilton



This decade-by-decade examination of U.S. social welfare and civil rights policy effectively dispels previous misunderstandings about the complex interplay of social welfare, race, and politics in the United States. Dona Cooper Hamilton and Charles V. Hamilton offer a groundbreaking analysis of the activities of civil rights organizations on a wide range of non-race-specific issues, including social security, employment, housing, and health care.

"THE DUAL AGENDA documents that, contrary to popular misconception, the civil rights agenda is an American agenda. Organizations like the National Urban League and the NAACP have throughout their history labored to persuade this nation to live up to the edict in our Constitution that 'all men are created equal' and to honor the Preamble which calls upon government to 'promote the general welfare.'" —Hugh B. Price, President, National Urban League

384 pages ★ $24.95, cloth
Power, Conflict, and Democracy: American Politics Into the 21st Century
Robert Y. Shapiro, Editor

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
At bookstores. ★ http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

polls, the federal government was, once upon a time, a force for enormous good, and it is only the unthinking Southerner who unreservedly joins in the shrill anti-Washington mood of the moment. The second is equally important: race relations only improve when there is a change of heart as well as of law. This sounds obvious, but in a way the real story of race in the contemporary South is what happened *after* the high-water mark of the mid- to late-'60s—after the March on Washington, and after the Lorraine Motel.

Nadine Cohodas, the author of a strong 1993 biography of Strom Thurmond, explores the tricky terrain of the post-Movement South in this new book. She chooses Ole Miss and Meredith, and sets a high bar for herself: "The legal apparatus of segregation has been dismantled and replaced by laws with noble goals and the mechanisms to enforce them, and although minorities had integrated all facets of life, most visibly the political world, the reality of the 1990s, with rising resegregation in schools and neighborhoods and continued racial hostility, was not the one many of us envisioned...What had gotten in the way?"

This is a very difficult question, and Cohodas's choice of venue—the internal history of Ole Miss, the largest university in what is, next to Alabama, the most racially fraught state in the country—sheds only a little light on the answer. The best explanation may be that generations of segregation and entrenched attitudes take generations to undo—and we don't know yet if they can ever be completely undone. To be sure, Cohodas shows that blacks have made once-unimagined progress at the school. This is a journey, after all, that began with James Meredith and the might of JFK's government forcing their way into a registrar's office. As Cohodas tells it, reporters asked Meredith whether he was happy once he enrolled. "This is not a happy day," Meredith replied.

It wasn't. Two men—a reporter and a maintenance man—were dead of bullet wounds; 166 marshals and 40 soldiers were injured. But Jim Crow had finally lost a skirmish, and would never really recover. For anyone familiar with the movement, these are familiar touchstones: the tear gas at Oxford; the recalcitrant Governor Barnett ducking the Kennedys' calls; Burke Marshall, one of RFK's "band of brothers" at the Justice Department, furiously negotiating on the ground.

Cohodas makes two original points worth considering. The first is a bit of largely forgotten history. The Lost Cause symbols that are even now causing trouble in the South—the Confederate battle flag, team nicknames like the "Rebels," playing "Dixie" as a school's fight song—were not traditions cultivated by men just off their horses from Appomattox. At Ole Miss the flag and "Dixie" were added to football pageantry in 1948, the year Thurmond and his "Dixiecrats" bolted the Democratic Party in Philadelphia when the convention that nominated President Truman adopted a pro-civil-rights plank. (As the movement grew after the Brown decisions in 1954 and 1955, states like Georgia would also cotton on to Old South imagery, especially the battle flag, as symbols of defiance and resistance to federal integration orders.)

Cohodas's reporting turns up a second insight: The country may not have achieved King's vision of racial equality, but all is not bleak. She quotes two professors who recently wrote that Ole Miss, like the state, has something unique to offer: "a tragic history and the experience of attempting to transcend that tragic past into a triumphant present, to transform ourselves from a symbol of racism to a symbol of racial respect." Cohodas adds: "'Racial respect' was a striking term, careful, even modest—a phrase that implied limits and boundaries and one that aimed for something less grand than 'color-blind society' and more pragmatic than 'race neutral.' 'Racial respect' is not an attempt to blur or erase differences but to acknowledge and accept them so that a working whole can come out of separate parts."

Respect implies deference, and the exercise of manners. Without them all the court decisions and all the battles could never have sustained a gradually improving South. And the South is slowly, by fits and starts, getting better; there is still *de facto* segregation, of course, but it's even worse outside the old Confederacy. History, Robert Penn Warren once said, knows no leaps—except the leap backward, maybe. I hope the country uses this anniversary year to

Minority Rights, Majority Rule

Partisanship and the Development of Congress

Sarah A. Binder

Minority Rights, Majority Rule seeks to explain why majority parties have consistently been so powerful in the U.S. House of Representatives while minorities often prevail in the Senate. Dr. Binder charts the history of minority rights in both chambers and explains how partisan battles – fought under rules inherited from the past – have shaped the creation and suppression of minority rights. Her statistical analysis and historical work provide the first comprehensive account of the development of minority rights in Congress and contribute to literature on the historical development of Congress.

58239-3	Hardback	$59.95
58792-1	Paperback	$18.95

Available in bookstores or from CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211.
Call toll-free 800-872-7423.
Web site: http://www.cup.org
MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

remind ourselves what we have to do to stay on the road that leads us away from our worst instincts, and toward our better ones.

JON MEACHAM *is* Newsweek's *national affairs editor.*

Redefining Judaism

by Murray Polner

THERE IS A SPECTER HOVERING over mainstream American Jewish groups. It's called "Jewish continuity," an overheated reaction referring to the dread that the number of American Jews may sharply decline in the next century. Yet if true, and only if true, it is a predicament born of living in an open society which fosters freedom of choice. Public anti-Semitism is by and large a thing of the past. Indeed, never before have so many Jews been so secure, accepted, and successful. The United States—and certainly not Israel—has become our *goldene medina*, our golden, promised land.

Then why so much anxiety about whether Jewish women and men can be moved enough to remain Jewish, and agree to marry other Jews, and pass on the faith to their children and they to theirs? Is it possible that Israel and the collective memorialization of the Holocaust can no longer hold us together? That more positive, more Judaic values are required?

These two contentious and tendentious books by writers not known to be diffident about speaking their minds might never have appeared had not the National Jewish Population Study announced in 1990 that between 1985-1990, 52 percent of Jews were intermarried (though the actual figure may be six to 12 percentage points less). This "more than half" figure was a bombshell, especially since as late as the mid-'60s the rate was less than 10 percent. If so many Jews were marrying out, and their children only half-Jews, the reasoning went, might not the bulk of non-Orthodox Jews gradually fade away and "assimilate," abandoning a priceless 5,000-year-old heritage to a provincial and sectarian Orthodox remnant? Was a "demographic disaster" (as Elliot Abrams puts it) really awaiting us? Are we (as Dershowitz's title says) "vanishing"?

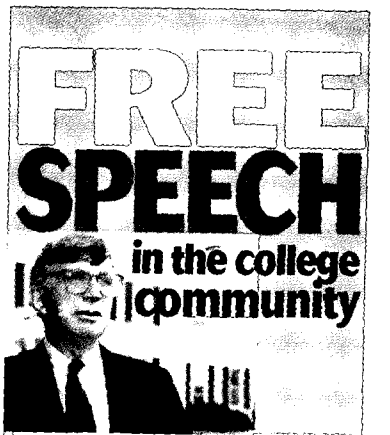
Still, skeptics abound. American Jews have neither converted in any significant number nor assimilated. Historian Gerald Sorin, in his new book *Tradition Transformed: The Jewish Experience in America*, makes an excellent case that we have instead acculturated. Assimilation, Sorin reminds us, means essentially the extinction of ethnic or religious singularity, whereas the bulk of American Jews have and may continue to undergo acculturation: "accommodation to the larger society without total loss of traditional cultural traits." Here in the U.S. they built "a religiously authenticated Jewish American ethnic identity around philanthropy, Israelism, political liberalism and the search for social justice as well as around anti-anti-Semitism."

THE VANISHING AMERICAN JEW: In Search of Jewish Identity for the Next Century
by Alan Dershowitz
Little, Brown, $24.95

FAITH OR FEAR: How Jews Can Survive in a Christian America
by Elliott Abrams
The Free Press, $25

In their new books, the conservative Elliott Abrams, once a key player in the Reagan administration's Central American policy and now head of an ethics think tank, and Alan Dershowitz, the liberal appellate lawyer of Claus von Bulow and O.J. Simpson fame, both accept the Chicken Little hypothesis while offering quite different solutions. In fact, their books are so provocative—and illuminating—that they are sure to touch off a good deal of furious debate.

Abrams, a self-described religiously "somewhat observant Conservative Jew," offers his vision of what American Jewish life could be if only Jews turn their backs on liberal causes. How so? By warming to the



Robert M. O'Neil

All of today's "hot-button" issues are dealt with in this timely book, from Holocaust denial to claims of racial determination of intelligence to hate speech. Former college president Robert O'Neil dramatically illustrates the many types of problems that confront university administrators, frequently using representative fictional characters and discourse to present the situations. *Free Speech in the College Community* illustrates the many problems that now confront universities by questioning whether or not speech on campus should be freer than speech on the streets.

280 pages
cloth $24.95

Join the Web debate
http://www.indiana.edu/~iupress/freespeech
about free speech on campus!

At bookstores
INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS
Orders: 1-800-842-6796
http://www.indiana.edu/~iupress

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ardently pro-Israel Christian Right, and abandoning many of its old allies in separation of church and state and school prayer issues. Above all, the "American Jewish community must conceive of itself as a *religious* community" or else begin to "decline" since "continuity programs cannot work unless they are centered on faith in God," warns Abrams.

To Abrams and his fellow neoconservatives, liberalism is now spent, having long since run out of ideas. He would probably feel much better if his fellow Jews voted their economic and political interest and engaged and enlightened the Christian Right, which, once it understands our concerns, can be allies. But even more to the point, as conservatives never fail to remind us, the Christian Right is a crucial and undeviating friend of Israel.

The fact is, however, that the overwhelming number of American Jews are dedicated to pluralism and tolerance and keeping government's hand far from religion. They would reject Abrams's views, preferring instead to view the Christian Right as the Anti-Defamation League did in 1994 when it published its critical "The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance & Pluralism in America."

Soon after, Abrams and 74 fellow travelers condemned the ADL in a *New York Times* ad, complaining: "It ill behooves an organization dedicated to fighting against defamation to engage in defamation of its own." So, it's hardly an eye-opener when Abrams informs readers that "American Jews believe simply as an article of faith that a more religious society threatens them—and this had been a much more powerful credo for the American Jew than any of the laws of Moses." Or that: "All too many Jewish groups act not as Jewish entities but rather as liberal political bodies, taking on the evangelicals on such matters as gun control or gay rights." And given their "shrinking" numbers, Abrams advises: Jews should "work closely with Christian groups whose size and influence are growing, and which are strongly pro-Israel." On other issues, "clarify for them the worries and concerns of Jews." Should this unlikely entente come to pass, let us pray that some basic biblical precepts such as "Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself" and "Do Unto Others as You Would Have Others Do Unto You" will be conveyed to them as well.

Dershowitz, reared and educated as Orthodox, is now a secular Jew but just as concerned about keeping the faith. His interest, however, lies in creating an eclectic Judaism open to all who wish to enter. What is needed, he insists, is intensive, positive, quality schooling about Jewish history, literature, culture, and religion that also respects and welcomes a secular, humanistic Judaism; however, he never convincingly gives an answer to the question Abrams and others have asked: how an approach which draws in those who do not believe in the divine interpretation of the torah or in some spiritual aspect will preserve Judaism in future generations.

Even so, he is far more realistic than Abrams, especially in reflecting the lives of Jews in so diverse a religion and society. "The Judaism I am trying to defend and enhance is a Judaism of ideas, of attitudes, of skepticism, of justice, of compassion, of argumentation and of inclusiveness." To him, that means among other things accepting any non-Jewish wife or husband "who wants to be part of our heritage" and acknowledging the legitimacy of cultural and secular Judaism. "That kind of Judaism does not depend on numbers, or on religious definitions of who is a Jew. ...That kind of Judaism depends on the power of Jewish ideas to educate, influence, and repair the world"—the mainspring of Jewish attachment to liberalism. Dershowitz's liberalism also recognizes the elementary truth that Jews are not and have never been monolithic. We are everything from anarchists to Zionists, liberals, conservatives and radicals, neo-and paleo-conservatives, an all-inclusive tent which, I would hope, accepts that Noam Chomsky is as much a Jew as Irving Kristol and that a female Reform rabbi is as Jewish as an ultra-Orthodox rabbi.

Whatever the future holds, there is much in Judaism and Jewish life which conforms to the best this country and its ideals offer, and whose spiritual and moral values are not only appealing but worth preserving. In the wise words of my late friend Henry Schwarzschild: "Jews are defined by neither doctrine nor credo. We are defined by *task*. That task is to redeem the world through justice...Even the unbelievers among us are never so Jewish as when they reject social apathy and confront the desperate needs of their brothers and sisters...not because our well-being depends on it, but because Judaism does."

If that's "liberalism" and "social justice," it stands a far better chance of keeping Jews Jewish than does genuflecting before the Christian Right and its handful of Jewish allies.

MURRAY POLNER *is co-editor (with Adam Simms) of the independent biweekly newsletter* PS. The Intelligent Guide to Jewish Affairs.

Common Bond

by Chalmers Roberts

PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE: American Identity and the Bond Drive of World War II
by Lawrence E. Samuel
Smithsonian Institution Press, $27.50

DURING WORLD WAR I, WHEN I was a kid of six and seven, I grew radishes in my backyard "victory garden," Mom knitted wool socks for the doughboys, and Dad bought Liberty bonds. During World War II, my wife and I put all the savings we could manage into war bonds, an act which eventually helped build us a home.

All this seemed to me nothing more than simple acts of patriotism to which neighbors and friends alike contributed. But Lawrence E. Samuel, a teacher-businessman-Smithsonian fellow, has turned the whole business into something of far greater scale.

After rummaging through the archives of the two wars and their fiscal underpinnings—and through much of the NAACP's records from the period—he announces that:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"War bonds both reflected and helped shape a new version of Americanism, steeped in the enduring paradox of '*e pluribus unum*,' out of many, one." In prose that is too often turgid, Samuel goes on to explain that whereas in the first war, bond drives centered on lining everybody up behind the dominant white idea, during the second war the bond sellers reflected the fact that the country had changed and so the selling was less nativist and more inclusive of the population, most notably of black Americans. "War bonds," says Samuel, "acted as a catalyst in the shift from New Deal populism to a nationalism predicated on the common pursuit of affluence, linking pluralism to the universally shared desire for the good life."

Amidst the author's maddening semantics and too many facts and figures we don't need to know, there are some interesting observations—most notably on the role of African Americans in the second world war. As you might expect, given the extent of racial segregation in America at the beginning of World War II, "African Americans were ambivalent toward the war effort." William Pickens, field director of the NAACP, became a key player in countering that attitude. He "pointed to the ideals of the American enlightenment, contrasting them with the racist philosophies embedded in Axis fascism and totalitarianism." Samuel also discusses the work of that truly great black leader, A. Philip Randolph, and of Walter White and Roy Wilkins, who skillfully parlayed wartime racial advances into the leaps forward of post-war America. The patriotic *bona fides* they displayed during the war were cashed in later on.

President Roosevelt is also credited with welcoming African Americans into the national fold. In a 1943 photo op FDR appeared with a black messenger who had once been his chauffeur, the president presenting him and others as "just a small cross section of the White House staff" subscribing to bonds.

CHALMERS ROBERTS, *a retired* Washington Post *reporter, lives in Bethesda, Maryland.*

Fresh Blood

by Greig O'Brien

HORATIO ALGER, THAT CULTURAL icon of the 19th century, was the definitive chronicler of the American dream—a dream based on the celebration of rugged individualism and the promise of upward mobility. Alger's heroes were invariably outsiders, brave men and women who traveled to the infant metropolises of the 1800s and, through toil and determination, rose through the ranks of the social hierarchy. Since the beginning of the 20th century, however, Alger's optimistic legacy has withered. Powerful and impersonal economic forces have robbed us of our sense of economic mobility and individual stability. Hope has vanished from the landscape of the American mind

THE OTHER AMERICANS
by Joel Millman
Viking, $24.95

But revitalization is just beyond our border, says Joel Millman. In his new book, *The Other Americans*, Millman suggests that immigrants could be the most effective source for two of this country's most basic needs: hope and prosperity. Through historical context and individual narratives, Millman constructs a powerful answer to the anti-immigrant ravings of the right. Unfortunately Millman never directly confronts his nativist opposition—and this weakens his argument. Nevertheless, by showcasing the success of various immigrant groups across the United States, he shows how large groupings of immigrants not only thrive, but benefit their surrounding communities and cities as well.

The presence of immigrants is especially beneficial when immigrant groups reach "critical mass"—when the influx into specific neighborhoods grows large enough for a cohesive ethnic community to develop. As Millman points out, at least in the case of New York, "throughout the peak years of immigration, arrests for rape, robbery, murder, and theft kept trending, stubbornly, down," while in periods of low immigration, crime rates rose. While he makes sure not to attribute this statistic purely to the presence of new Americans, it is a coincidence that should be investigated further and pointed out to our policy-makers whenever they feel the need to boost their profile by attacking the ever-present "alien" problem.

An important characteristic of this "critical mass" community is a growing immigrant middle-class that stays put. The biggest drain on our nation's cities since World War II has been the middle-class relocation to the suburbs—a trend that began in the '50s and has since intensified. But making our inner cities more hospitable again doesn't seem to require more law enforcement. (although that remains the favorite prescription of politicians looking to "make a stand.") For a demonstration of the ineffectiveness of this approach, residents of the nation's capital need only recall how President Bush's Drug Czar, William Bennett, pledged to "clean up" the Washington drug scene with an "emergency" $80 million dollar policy—$79 million of it spent on increased law enforcement. One year later, the effort was declared a miserable failure. Bennett retracting the program and claimed "a limited success" for the federal government.

What seems to be a more effective solution to our crumbling inner cities, if we listen to Millman, is the renewal of these "lost" neighborhoods by immigrant influxes. In America, immigrants see opportunity—the spirit of Horatio Alger that our country has been exporting for a 150 years but doesn't truly believe in itself. "The land of milk and honey" draws immigrants in search of wealth and a new life. They don't see "the streets of guns and poverty" until they touch down.

Undaunted, most of these new Americans manage to make a decent living. True, many send a sizable portion of their earnings back home (to be spent in foreign markets, as many nativists charge). But more often the money is saved so that the rest of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

family can join their pioneering kin in America. Reunited, they begin to work as a unit—working and spending together. And spending a lot. Citing figures from the 1990 census, Millman notes, "Immigrant families earn like the poor but spend like the middle class."

Millman argues that spending is crucial to economic revitalization. We live in a consumer economy: The more money spent in a certain community, the more jobs will be created with that money. The days of a producer-oriented economy, when the reverse was true—more jobs meant more spending—have been gone since the '50s, and possibly as long ago as the Roaring Twenties. Thus, the most effective way to renew our dilapidated inner cities would be an influx of fluidly spending individuals. And the most accessible, and most eager, to fill this role are immigrants.

But immigrant families give a community yet another advantage. Unlike nuclear families of decades past, even when they begin to prosper, they stay put. Having already spent the effort to bring to the country not only their spouses and children, but also parents and cousins as well, why would they leave? Through their collective diligence and perspiration, their families prosper just as they had predicted.

As time goes on, and more families join and stay, these renewing neighborhoods could become what they once were—prosperous, middle-class, and full of young families. But there will be one major difference from 50 years ago: This time the communities almost definitely will not be white. With the renewal of enough of these neighborhoods, America will finally be forced to confront a large and prosperous (thus influential) non-white class. This country's track-record in the area of race relations is subpar, to say the least, and has far to go. The development of these prosperous non-white communities, integrated with other similar communities in what resembles a realization of Randolph Bourne's "trans-national" vision for America, could force resolutions for problems of race that no group has had the power to do in the past.

This interaction within the United States will also serve as a dress rehearsal for the larger, international interaction that is bound to develop in coming decades. In a global marketplace, America will not have the luxury to reign supreme and dictate our whims to the rest of the world. Therefore, before we test this new frontier, we must settle our own pressing contradictions. To speak of a global village and the barring of immigration in the same breath is hypocritical. We have to make a choice. Immigrants or dilapidated inner cities. Young, nonwhite vitality or elderly, white nativism. "The land of milk and honey" or "the streets of guns and poverty."

GREIG M. O'BRIEN *is a Washington, D.C.-based writer.*

One School's Success

by Michael K. Mayo

A FEW MONTHS AGO, GEORGE Will devoted a column to praising one of my brother schools, St. Ignatius Academy in the inner city of Baltimore. If the school sounds like "a faint, quaint echo from another century," he writes, "so much the worse for ours." And who can doubt him? Loyola is small, intense, and Jesuit; it has high expectations and tells children how to meet them; it is highly successful. The sucker punch, though, is as obvious as the by-line. We don't need school boards, goes the subtext. We just need Jesuits.

AGAINST THE CURRENT
by Michael Brosnan
Heinemann, $24.95

While the idea intrigues me, it conveniently leaves the rest of us out of the picture. That's the problem with the flood of Triumphant Schools books out there—accounts of embattled, heroic children get tossed up like tennis balls, which can be whacked into any ideological corner if untethered to a hard analysis of the facts. Remember that bizarre story of the black principal who kept order with his baseball bat? What weird message lurks there?

Michael Brosnan almost overcomes this slipperiness in *Against the Current: How One School Struggled and Succeeded with At-Risk Teens.* It is the lively, if not always lucid, tale of the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program, a new two-year school which serves Providence's most "at-risk" children. Brosnan easily picks up the school's energy. He's honest enough to profile the average, non-angelic kids who don't seem to deserve their school; he also includes plenty of stories of kids who, finally given the chance most suburban Americans have had, sweat out their circumstances and succeed. In interviews with teachers, students, and the endlessly energetic founder and principal, Rob DeBlois, Brosnan pulls together a realistic story of a school with its head on straight. And he gives hints of how it can—and cannot—happen elsewhere.

"How do you get a kid to work on English when he has had a few bottles of beer before class?" asks one teacher. DeBlois's answer: Make that kid's school small. With only 105 students, the school can give the attention they demand and the sense of community they don't get at home. Teachers spend hours and hours cheerleading kids, trying to convince them why school matters. In a traditional, big, sink-or-swim high school, these kids would be sunk.

Just as important as size, DeBlois has also carved out independence from the public school board. Though publicly funded, the Urban Collaborative is run entirely by the teachers. Discipline is always a problem, but it's handled better here because DeBlois knows each child and his or her parents. In one encounter, a student appears to have raped a girl in the back seat of a school bus. His excuse? He'd just finished smoking pot a few seats ahead of her. DeBlois doesn't have to wait long to find the facts, make a decision with his faculty, and get the kid expelled.

And as for academics, teachers are free to pursue the program that best

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suits the bodies sitting in front of them. Referring to popular trends in naturalistic, "whole language" writing instruction, English teacher Lynne Abbott says, "I know a lot of people think [grammar is] a waste of time, that kids are supposed to pick up grammar through osmosis or something. But the thing is, kids don't get it." Only a teacher could tell you that. And at this school here, she's the one writing the curriculum.

This independence also means the school can offer a radical and brilliant idea that they call "acceleration." Any student can move up a grade as soon as he or she has mastered the material for that level. Motivated kids catch up in no time; lazy kids quickly learn where their laziness gets them. "Hey, why is she accelerating, and I'm not a quarter of the way through my work and I've been here longer than she has?" asks one noble soul. At that, a friend whacks him over the head with a baseball cap and says, "That's because she works, dickhead." As DeBlois puts it, "Our philosophy in an eloquent nutshell."

Some of DeBlois's philosophies are hard to swallow. Kids call their teachers by their first names ("I feel that we are on the same level or something"—blecch), kids talk through assembly ("Getting them here is half the battle")—but if it works, who cares? Success keeps the bureaucrats at bay: Of the Urban Collaborative's 450 graduates, 80 percent go on to finish high school. (The dropout rate in Providence is nearly 50 percent.) The book implicitly (too implicitly) supports the idea that we could do much better with a system of public, independent, inner-city schools, each with its own philosophy and success stories. After all, that's what wealthy private schools have been doing for centuries.

These are the Urban Collaborative's successes; Brosnan has a few of his own. He does, in fact, place the school within broader contexts and offers the usual solutions. East Greenwich, R.I., has $405,547 worth of taxable property per child, while Providence has only $143,643. Yet this is the way we choose to fund public schools.

There are more of these familiar, teeth-grinding facts: Last year, for instance, the Pentagon spent $40 billion on unnecessary items. Half that amount would fund 20,000 Urban Collaboratives (or 67,000 Nativity Preps)—a far worthier investment in our national defense. Another one: the Gulf War cost $1 billion every day. (That's a thousand new schools every morning.) And closer to home, the Rhode Island state training school costs $92,000 per year per inmate—and the vast majority are, of course, high school dropouts.

Of course. The facts are old. "Sadly," Brosnan writes, "many school reformers are beginning to talk pessimistically about it all, wondering how often the message has to be repeated before it sinks in." The thing is, they don't sink in. We've heard these stories ad nauseam, and the fascinating question is why nothing seems to happen.

Brosnan has one answer, lurking in the back of the book behind too many Triumphant Kid stories. It comes when he describes, painfully quickly, the political landscape when the Urban Collaborative "was taxiing down the runway, waiting for takeoff." Rhode Island was, at the time, infusing tens of millions of dollars to save its credit unions. Brosnan describes each politician's budgetary dilemma, and how each level of government passed the problem off to the next. In a strange twist, it comes down between funding the Urban Collaborative and funding all school sports in Providence. Like so much legislative procedure, it's absurd, destructive, and apparently no one's fault. Here Brosnan makes his most insightful revelation: "Our layered system of government, regardless of its other successes and shortcomings, is simply not conducive to educational reform—even when it is clear that reform is necessary."

In the face of this political conclusion, what relevance can a hundred stories of heroic kids have beyond sentimentality? Jonathan Kozol describes this situation—we write these satisfying stories of "hope in the ashes," and then keep piling on more ashes. If the Urban Collaborative was next to impossible to start and operate, why exactly was that? Can these explanations give us direction on how to change the system we have now?

Even worse, the book gets confusing at the most fundamental level. How old, for instance, are these kids? I suspect that they are ninth and tenth graders, since it's a two-year program leading into high school halfway through, but Brosnan also says that they recruit mainly from the 6th and 7th grades. And other than that brief political analysis, he offers no history of the school before the doors opened. How did DeBlois get it started? How do we get there from here?

Brosnan's blueprint is nearly complete, and even the triumphant child stories are fun to read and, indeed, awesome. Yet less "hope from the ashes" and more concrete analysis would have countered the implication that the Urban Collaborative is a lucky aberration, rather than a universal possibility.

MICHAEL K. MAYO *is a teacher at Nativity Preparatory School in Roxbury, Massachusetts.*

Murray Kempton

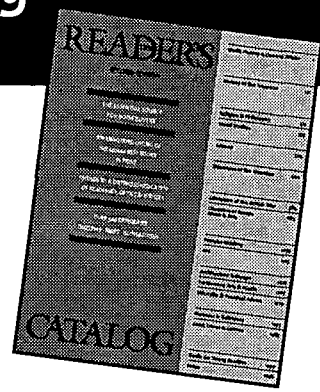
OUR FEELINGS ABOUT THE late Murray Kempton, who was an original member of our editorial advisory board, were summarized in the headline and subhead that we gave David Halberstam's review of Kempton's most recent book: "The Real Founder of the New Journalism—Tom Wolfe may be more famous, but it was Murray Kempton, starting in the '50s, who made reporting funnier and smarter." For me he was an oasis in the journalistic desert of that time, funny when most columnists thought they had to be solemn, stylistically original when everyone tried to write like Walter Lippmann, and a real reporter in an era when most pundits thought a phone conversation or a lunch with a prominent source represented the outer limit of investigative zeal.

—CHARLES PETERS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Acclaim for *The Reader's Catalog*

A Book-of-the-Month Club Selection



"*The Reader's Catalog* is the best book without a plot."—*Newsweek*

"The most attractively laid out and compactly informative guide that I know of to books that are currently in print."
—*The New York Times*

"A catalog of 40,000 distinguished titles, organized in 208 categories, for readers who hunger for the quality and variety available in today's mass-market bookstores. Hallelujah!"—*Time*

"A browser's paradise."
—*Library Journal*

"The scope of the endeavor is, as the kids are wont to say, awesome."
—*The Baltimore Sun*

"It must be called a triumph."
—*The Los Angeles Times*

"The catalog is discriminating yet expansive, a feat of editing that anyone who has wasted time rooting out data in the weeds of the Internet will appreciate." —*Newsday*

"A valuable literary tool that's not only a reader's resource, but also a browser's delight."
—*Parade Magazine*

"The best reading-group and bookstore guide available."
—*Time Out*

YOUR GUIDE TO THE 40,000 BEST BOOKS IN PRINT

THE READER'S CATALOG

TO ORDER: CALL 1 800 733-BOOK

OR VISIT YOUR LOCAL BOOKSTORE TODAY

$34.95 • Distributed by Consortium

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The pulse of the world from the heart of the nation.

Don't miss a thing. Subscribe to *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*. And be privy to astute analysis of the policies, issues, debates and developments that make the world's pulse race.

You get the *inside* word here. Straight talk from the political pundits. In-depth coverage of the powers that be in Congress, the White House and abroad. Brilliant observations of the day's most significant political events. A roundup of rare, resourceful commentary on the Administration's every move.

This special weekly edition of *The Post* is read widely with the same high regard as our daily paper. It's full of exclusive reports and expert opinion to help you uncover the big-picture implications of today's agenda. It's written by individuals who are uniquely qualified to interpret Washington affairs with remarkable insight. Investigative reporters like Bob Woodward. Observers like Jim Hoagland and Robert Samuelson. Plus guest authorities in every field.

Week in and week out, *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition* keeps you abreast of our ever-swirling political scene. You get ...

■ **Capital Politics.** Penetrating assessments of the government's most controversial matters from the Pulitzer Prize-winning dean of American political analysts, David Broder.

Save 62% off the cover price!

■ **The Political Pulse.** Puts your finger on the significance of shifts and surges in the parties, voters, ethics, elections, campaigns, referendums, committees, lobbies and policies of America.

■ **The Global Pulse.** Amazing stories and investigative reports from the diplomatic front. We identify and examine the ripple effects of events as far away as the Persian Gulf to Peru, the Soviet Union to South Africa.

■ **The Economic Pulse.** Forecasts and appraisals that probe beneath the surface of such weighty economic matters as energy, credit, the stock market, international finance, banking, labor, trade and more.

■ **Commentary.** Lively debate and provocative ideas from George Will, Tom Edsall, Dan Balz and other foremost political thinkers and writers.

■ **Editorials.** Trenchant views edited by Pulitzer Prize-winning *Post* editorial page editor, Meg Greenfield — plus our eye-opening op-ed page and the amusing visual observations of Herblock, the three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist.

■ **The Government Pulse.** Stay on top of new directions in law, health care, defense and the environment. For example: AIDS prevention campaigns and federal funding. Global warming's price tag. The potential for postwar terrorism. The perils of mandatory retirement. And more.

■ **Book World.** The most important new books are subjected to candid, stimulating reviews by well-known scholars, opinion leaders and best-selling authors themselves.

■ **What Americans Think.** Enjoy fascinating poll results on timely topics: Presidential approval ratings, civil rights trends, military matters, lifestyle habits and more.

■ **Science Lab.** Study the outcome of revealing reports, special research experiments and bold, new discoveries in such fields as psychology, medicine and conservation.

Indeed, The Washington Post National Weekly Edition *imparts a wealth of knowledge on politics, government, the economy, international affairs, business and industry. Go ahead. Read it for information. And use it to make decisions. Subscribe now and save 62% off the cover price. Complete and return the coupon below — today.*

Save 62%

(Complete, clip and mail coupon today.)

NATIONAL WEEKLY EDITION
The Washington Post

Subscription Savings Form JWM9703

☑ **YES!** Start my one-year subscription (52 issues) to *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition* for only $39. That's a savings of $9.00 off the basic subscription rate and $62.40 off the newsstand price.

❑ Payment enclosed.
❑ Bill me later.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Satisfaction Guaranteed or your money back on all unmailed issues.

Complete and mail to:
The Washington Post National Weekly Edition
P.O. Box 11331
Des Moines, IA 50340-1331

Allow 4-6 weeks for first issue to arrive

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BEYOND PUBLIC POLICY

The Road to Nowhere

The Genesis of President Clinton's Plan for Health Security

Jacob S. Hacker

During the 1992 presidential campaign, health care reform became a hot issue, paving the way for one of the most important yet ill-fated social policy initiatives in American history: Bill Clinton's 1993 proposal for comprehensive coverage under "managed competition." Drawing on records of the President's task force, interviews with a wide range of key policy players, and many other sources, Hacker provides a fascinating profile of how managed competition became the plan of choice.

"Mr. Hacker brings commendable clarity to a subject that has usually encouraged jargon and convolution. . . . Mr. Hacker's account, while not white-washing the President's blunders, usefully reminds us that he was operating under tight constraints."—David Greenberg, *New York Times Book Review*

Princeton Studies in American Politics
Ira Katznelson, Martin Shefter, and Theda Skocpol, Editors
Cloth $39.95 ISBN 0-691-04423-6

© Archive Photos

New in paperback

Winner of The Independent Sector's 1996 Virginia A. Hodgkinson Research Prize

Co-recipient of the 1996 ARNOVA Award for an Outstanding Book in Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Research

Why the Wealthy Give

The Culture of Elite Philanthropy

Francie Ostrower

Through a series of candid personal interviews with nearly 100 donors, this book offers an in-depth look at the world of elite philanthropy.

"With cutbacks in government spending looming, the leaders of America's charities are voicing concerns that they will be hard-pressed to pick up the slack. Whether this turns out to be the case depends in part on whether their wealthy supporters are ready to contribute more generously than before. Are they?. . . *Why the Wealthy Give* . . . helps to answer that question."
—*The Wall Street Journal*

Paper $14.95 ISBN 0-691-01588-0

Princeton University Press

AVAILABLE AT FINE BOOKSTORES OR DIRECTLY FROM THE PUBLISHER: 800-777-4726 • VISIT OUR WEBSITE: PUP.PRINCETON.EDU

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED